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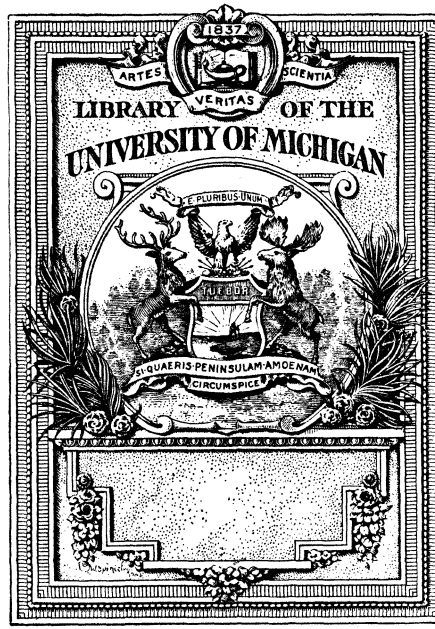

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THE

WINDSOR MAGAZINE

AN ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY

FOR

MEN AND WOMEN

VOL. XXII

JUNE TO NOVEMBER, 1905

LONDON

WARD, LOCK & CO., LIMITED

WARWICK HOUSE, SALISBURY SQUARE, E.C.

1905

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PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,
DUKE STREET, STAMFORD STREET, S.E., AND GREAT WINDMILL STREET, W.

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THE ART OF MR. FRED MORGAN.

By JOHN OLDCASTLE.

POPULARITY was not long ago alluded to in the language of paradox as an "insult"—the only "insult" not then offered to Mr. Whistler—an artist whom, by the way, Mr. Fred Morgan, with far different methods and aims, very heartily admires. But since all the world and his wife and daughter have flocked to Regent Street, not even Whistlerians—and everybody is now a Whistlerian—can speak of public appreciation as a stigma. One is quite sure that an artist like Mr. Fred Morgan never needed any persuasion on that point. He did not flout appreciation. He never wished for a public to astonish, only for a public to please. That he has succeeded in finding what he wanted is daily attested by the groups that gather before his canvases in exhibitions and, above all, before the reproductions of his works that hail the passer-by from the windows of the printsellers in the city's surging thoroughfares and in those havens – the streets of country towns.

Not long ago, civic authority raised a finger of menace against the outer shelf of the second-hand booksellers in Charing Cross Road. Their trespass on the street was an admitted offence against the by-laws; but it was one which the public easily condoned. Defenders of the threatened trade recalled how, in the past, one celebrity after another had found his first academy of literature in the book-barrow; and how, in the present, the offered books upon the outer shelves in Charing Cross Road were weekly handled by authors of mark, by students to whom library fees and hours were prohibitive, by the Prime Minister of England himself! Assuredly the printseller seconds his neighbour, the old-bookseller, as an educator, and with a more immediate appeal to the emotions. The early history of American art shows us,

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"MEADOW-SWEET." BY FRED MORGAN.

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moreover, how all-influential was a single imported picture of merit in the formation of a nation's school. If it was at sight of a Cimabue that Giotto cried: "I, too, am a painter!" and if our own Sir Joshua's powers were evoked by a visit to Venice, it is no very far cry to say that the window of the printseller in a provincial town may become the magic mirror in which the draughtsman of to-morrow discovers himself. The artists whose works predominate those windows can thenceforth include themselves among veritable Masters of Arts; and of that lucky number is the painter whose name stands at the head of this article.

Mr. Fred Morgan was "born in a studio," as the adapted saying goes; for his father was an artist, and from his father he learned all that he knows. That father's training was, therefore, in some sense his son's; and it was gained in Paris. Couture, the master of so many pupils, was the master of Morgan *père* among the rest. John Morgan was a member of the Society of British Artists, as well as a constant exhibitor at the Royal Academy. He was popularly known as "Jury Morgan," owing to his success with a picture, "The Gentlemen of the Jury," published as an engraving by Messrs. Henry Graves.

Born in London, Fred Morgan spent his youth in County Bucks. His father had a strong belief that an artistic career must be begun early, if at all, so he took his son away from school at fourteen and himself superintended the boy's studies from the antique.

Morgan the elder decided to give Morgan the younger a chance at the Arts. He put him on his mettle to produce something that would justify the choice. The youth entered into the spirit of the thing. He saw his opportunity and he took it. He had never worked so hard before; he has never since worked so hard; and no Dickens, dropping his first article into the letter-box of a news-

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"ROSES AND THORNS." BY FRED MORGAN.

paper, awaited the result with greater anxiety, with more hope at one moment, more fear at another, than this young artist awaited the verdict of his father, a verdict to be governed by the traditions—no mean ones—inherited in the studio of the classic Couture. The decision was in his favour; and his serious apprenticeship to the craft of painter began. A course of lessons in Edinburgh was taken; but that it had no great influence on his career may be judged by the abounding measure of his acknowledgment to the training he had from his father: "He taught me how to make *a picture*," Mr. Fred Morgan has said; and

"SUNNY HOURS." BY FRED MORGAN.

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"THE TIRED GLEANERS." BY FRED MORGAN.

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that, one may add, is just what many a student of the Academy, for instance, leaves the Schools without having learned to do. The father lived to see how well the lessons he gave had been taken to heart—happy father and happy son!

"FATHER'S WELCOME." BY FRED MORGAN.

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The next stage in his career is thus recalled by the artist: "My father hoped to make me an engraver, and with that object he consulted his friend Simmonds, who reproduced 'The Light of the World,' by Holman Hunt; but Simmonds required £400 with an apprentice, which put the matter quite out of consideration. So I was taught painting, and at the age of sixteen I sent a picture to the Royal Academy, the subject being 'The Rehearsal'—two old musicians practising for the village choir. To my astonishment and delight, this first effort was hung; and well I remember the foggy morning of the Varnishing Day, as I accompanied my father to the old gallery in Trafalgar Square. The elderly artists at the entrance asked if I had brought my pap-spoon. Still, there in one of the small rooms, on the *wall*, near the ground, was my modest production, looking, I thought, so tiny, but very careful as to finish. This was long before the days of the much-discussed Dado at Burlington House. Still greater was my delight when the news came that my picture was selected by a collector, for purchase at the Private View, for £20. With such an encouraging success at so early an age, I ought to have made more progress than I did; but, perhaps, being the only boy in the town of Aylesbury following the profession, thus lacking emulation, and also not being very robust in health, I seemed to lose heart, and

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"WATCHING AND WAITING." BY FRED MORGAN.

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"HAYMAKERS." BY FRED MORGAN.

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"THE FAVOURED SWAIN." BY FRED MORGAN.

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was hardly surprised when at nineteen my father decided that I should never be worth my salt at painting, and intimated that I had better try some other occupation."

"DON'T BE FRIGHTENED." BY FRED MORGAN.

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With this end in view, Mr. Morgan's father sent him to town, after giving him his *dot*—a five-pound note; and the youth, while it lasted, hunted the advertisement columns of newspapers and haunted the warehouses and offices in which there was a hint of a vacancy. Somehow, there was no room for him in the City. When he joined the *queue* of applicants, the attitude of those about him proclaimed him an alien; and, as he ascended the steps down which others were retreating, they shook their heads at him and exclaimed: "No use *your* climbing up there." Looking back now, Mr. Fred Morgan can no doubt bless the hands that rejected him; for to him it was given, in his own measure, to exercise the Napoleonic faculty of evolving a victory out of a defeat.

But defeat it seemed to be for the moment. The young man had to return home as one of the unemployed, and at a family council it was decided that he must once more try to become a successful artist. And then a small opening arose out of local circumstance. A photographer in Aylesbury wanted some portraits painted for clients who were not content with family photographs only. The young artist was offered the work, and eagerly accepted it. This led to his early return to London with specimens of his work, which he showed to various photographic firms, with the happy result of many remunerative portrait commissions. For three years he found a busy life and sufficient income in this work, and at the same time was

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"STEADY!" BY FRED MORGAN.

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"THE FIRST BIRTHDAY." BY FRED MORGAN.

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"SCHOOL BELLES." BY FRED MORGAN.

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able to paint sundry "subject" pictures as well as the portraits. Gradually he was able to relinquish the work for the photographers, but to this day he has never looked upon those three years as wasted time. The work in hand taught him to observe closely and to give the greatest attention to detail, and the successful artist of to-day considers that he could hardly have had a better training at that age, since he does not agree with the engraver, Thomas Landseer, that "photography is the foe to graphic art."

In 1874, Mr. Morgan received the kindest encouragement from Messrs. Agnew and Sons, who purchased all he could do for several years; and during this period he produced many of his most appreciated pictures, "The Haymakers," "Emigrants' Departure," "After the Reapers' Work is Done," "School Belles," "Charity." These were all painted in or near the village of Shere, near Guildford, a favourite artists' haunt. Here he had the good fortune to meet such men as Frank Walton, P.R.I., John Reid, John White, and J. L. Pickering.

"HIDE AND SEEK." BY FRED MORGAN.
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Since those days he has painted in Normandy, producing "Midday Rest," "An Apple Gathering," and "Meadow-Sweet." He has lived three years at Ventnor, in the Isle of Wight, where he painted "The Sunshine of his Heart," "The First Birthday," "Don't be Frightened," "Steady," "A Willing Hand," "Off for the Honeymoon," and many others; but for the most part the geography of his pictures, sea-shore, woodland, or village green, has been the result of assimilation rather than of actual reproduction.

Old age and youth are extremes that often meet, and always in amity, on the canvas of Mr. Fred Morgan. The burden of the tears of children is one of the bitterest

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"A DEVONSHIRE FLOOD." BY FRED MORGAN.

to be borne in contemporary life: there are those among social workers who hear even in their dreams the wail of uncared-for infancy.

> And well may the children weep before you;
> They are weary ere they run;
> They have never seen the sunshine; nor the glory
> Which is brighter than the sun.

Is it well or ill that no echo of Mrs. Browning's poem comes to us from the studios that witness the making of such pictures as "Meadow-Sweet," "Oranges and Lemons," "Hide and Seek," or "Watching and Waiting"?—all pictures of happy child-life. Mr. Fred Morgan's "Tired Gleaners" are not tired in heart or brain; and his "Heavy Load" is nothing more burdensome than a basket of apples. The art that is idyllic may have its weak point in ethics; it may be conceived in that Paradise that is the Fool's. But another reading is perhaps the truer. The ideal of the shop-window may become the reality of the street. Such pictures may at least set a fashion; they may be a declaration of the child's right to happiness far more eloquent than any that is made by the dull people who want to go to

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"A HEAVY LOAD." BY FRED MORGAN.

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Parliament and are punished by getting there. We may hold our belief in this apostolate of the printseller's window firmly and yet sanely, though the theory has its obvious pitfalls.

Mr. Fred Morgan does not come out as a conscious combatant; his studio is not already a camp at Armageddon. But nobody can mistake the ensign he flies in the market-places of Art, or doubt to which army it belongs. If evil can be ultimately best described in the line of Wordsworth, as, "all that is at enmity with joy," we have in his pictures only such good as is on terms with happiness. The gardens of his choosing are not those wherein the serpent lurks; in his "Roses and Thorns," it is but the unsentient raiment of the maiden that is pierced; and such canvases as "The Willing Hand," or "Grandfather's Birthday," show old age with no terrors, and youth as the heir of ages that leave no legacy of regret. We get enough of the reverse of the medal in our art, in our literature, in our lives, to be grateful to the painter who will put up for the popular eye a very different pattern. Of old, the ballad-maker, no great poet either, was the maker, too, of the emotions of men. The ballad-maker is banished from modern pavements; in every direction we see that the appeal is made now to the eye rather than to the ear; the thing seen prevails and is influential, rather than the thing heard.

Of all the great discoveries—or rediscoveries—of the last century, the child is surely the greatest. The eighteenth century saw his cenotaph in literature; but the child was not really buried; he sallied forth in the poetry of Wordsworth and of Blake. Art—the art of Gainsborough and of Reynolds—had led the way; and the children who bloomed upon their canvases have proved to be the parents of an immortal brood. They were the first of "the darling young" in English art; but their race is still renewed on the earth. The child is the favourite model, despite his disqualifications as a sitter. Mr. Fred Morgan has found sitters among his own children, and he has found them outside his own circle wherever he has worked—in town, at Norwood once, and now at Broadstairs. An artist of his era in his choice of child-subjects, he is also of his generation in his methods, reminding us in his sympathies now of this contemporary, now of that. Yet he has kept to his own chosen way with the vigilance of a palmer, the shrine of childhood always before him as his goal. Where is the child, his Holy Land is there. On that heavenly city he has kept a single eye. And the painter who acknowledges his debt to his own father has to-day the satisfaction of seeing one of his own sons emerge from the *rôle* of model in his father's pictures into that of successful artist. For the painter known as Val Havers, who has been represented by several idyllic landscapes and figure subjects at the Royal Academy, is none other than the eldest son of Mr. Fred Morgan.

Though a member of the Society of Oil Painters, Mr. Morgan's successes have been made mostly at Burlington House. Towards the Royal Academy he looks with more hope and appreciation than is common. And he has exhibited no less than fifty-seven pictures on its walls.

MR. FRED MORGAN.

Mr. Morgan much admires the work of Mr. Clausen and Mr. La Thangue, the latter being the best talker on art that he knows. The artist "lives by admiration" quite as much as on it; and two of Mr. Fred Morgan's special admirations are given to Raphael and Ludwig Knaus. Some of the paintings of children made by the Director of the German Academy, Mr. Fred Morgan considers equal to anything of the kind that Raphael himself ever did. The Knaus influence on his work is apparent—if not to others, at any rate to Mr. Morgan himself.

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THE SPECULATIONS OF JACK STEELE

By ROBERT BARR.*

I.—THE STATION-MASTER.

STATION-MASTER said nonchalantly that he had nothing to do with it, and from out the telegraph-office he brought a stout, wooden chair which he set down in the dark strip of shade which ran along the pine platform under the eaves of the station. The back of this chair being tilted against the building, the station-master sat down in it, put his heels on the wooden round, took from his pocket a jack-knife, and began to whittle a stick, an occupation which the momentary pausing of the express seemed to have interrupted. There was nothing of the glass of fashion or the mould of form about the station-master. He was dressed in weather-worn trousers, held to his thin frame by a pair of suspenders quite evidently home-made, which came over his shoulders, and underneath this was a coarse, woollen shirt, open at the throat because the button had gone. On top of all this was a three-year-old, dilapidated straw hat which had once possessed a wide brim, but was now in a state of disrepair in thorough keeping with the costume. Yet in spite of appearances he was a capable young man who could work a telegraphic machine at reasonable speed, was well up in the business pertaining to Slocum Junction, and had definite opinions regarding the manner in which the affairs of the nation should be carried on. Indeed, at that moment he was an exemplification of the independence for which his country had fought and bled. No one knew better than he that the Greased Lightning Express would never have halted for an instant at Slocum Junction unless it did so to put off a person of some importance. But that important person had begun to give his opinion of the locality in language that was painful and free, the moment he realised the situation, and the station-master signified his resentment by sitting down in the chair and assuming a careless attitude, which told the stranger plainer than words that he could go to the devil if he wished. For all he knew, the obstreperous person who had stepped from the express might be his chief, but the station-master made no concession to that possibility.

Opposite him in the blazing sunlight stood a dapper young man grasping a neat hand-bag. He might have posed as a tailor's model, and he offered a striking contrast to the unkempt station-master. He cast an almost despairing look at the vanishing express, now a mere dot in the horizon, with a trail of smoke, as if it were a comet that had run aground. Then he turned an exasperated face upon the complacent station-master.

"You are not responsible for the situation, eh? You don't seem to care much, either."

"Well, to tell the truth, stranger, I don't."

"You mean to tell me there's no train for two hours and a half on the branch line?"

"I never said anything of the sort, because there isn't any branch line."

"No branch line? Why, there it is before my eyes! There's a locomotive, of a kind, and a composite passenger and freight-car that evidently dates from the time of the Deluge. Noah used that car!" cried the angry stranger.

"Well, if Noah was here, he wouldn't use it for two hours and a half," said the station-master complacently.

"I don't understand what you mean," protested the stranger. "Is there, or is there not, a train in two hours and a half?"

"Of course there is."

"You said a minute ago there wasn't."

"I didn't say anything of the kind; and if you weren't adding your own natural heat to the unnatural heat of the day, you'd learn something. You were talking about branch lines; I said there is no branch line. That's all."

"Then what's the meaning of those two lines of rust running to the right?"

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"There's five or six thousand people," droned the station-master, "who'd like to know what that object you're referring to really is. Leastways, they used to want to know, but lately they've given up all curiosity on the subject. They're the shareholders, who put up good money to have that road made. We call it the Farmers' Road, and it isn't a branch, but as independent as the main line."

"Or as yourself," hazarded the young man.

"Well, it's independent, anyhow," continued the station-master, "and I've nothing to do with it."

"Haven't the cursed fools who own it the sense to make it connect with anything on the main line?"

"Of course, we're all fools unless we come from Chicago," said the station-master imperturbably.

"I didn't say that," commented the stranger.

"No, *I* did. If your dome of thought was in working order, I shouldn't need to explain these things; but as I've nothing particular to do, I may as well teach a man from Chicago his A B C. You stepped off the express just now owning the whole country, populated with fools, according to you. I've been station-master here for eighteen months, and I never saw that express stop before. Now, I'm not such a fool, but I know that a man who steps off the Greased Lightning is one of two things. He is either a big bug with pull enough on the railway company to get them to stop the Greased Lightning for him, or else he's a tramp who can't pay his fare, and so is put off."

"Oh, you've sized me up, have you? Well, which am I? The millionaire or the tramp?"

"When you stepped off, I thought you were the millionaire; but the moment you opened your mouth, I knew you were the tramp."

Jack Steele laughed with very good-natured heartiness.

"Say, old man, that's all right. The drinks are on me, if there was a tavern near, which there doesn't seem to be. I suppose there's no place in this forsaken hole where on a hot day like this a man can get a cooling drink?"

"Stranger, you're continually jumping at conclusions and landing at the wrong spot. Allow me to tell you"—here he lowered his voice a bit—"that you don't raise no blush to my cheeks by anything you can say; but there's a lady in the waiting-room, and if I were you, I'd talk accordingly."

The change in the cocksure attitude of Jack Steele was so sudden and complete that it brought a faint smile of gratification to the gaunt face of the station-master.

"Great Heavens!" whispered the crest-fallen young man, "why didn't you tell me that before?"

"Well, you've been kind of monopolising the conversation, and I haven't had much chance to speak up to now. One would suppose that if a man had a thinking-machine in his head at all, he would know that the little road couldn't connect with a train that never stopped here."

"Of course, of course," said Jack hurriedly, his mind running on the language he had used in the first moments of chagrin at finding himself marooned at this desolate junction, which might have been heard by the unseen lady in the waiting-room. He hoped his voice hadn't carried through the pine wall.

"Well, station-master, I apologise. And now, if you will kindly tell me what the Farmers' Road *does* connect with, I'll be very much obliged."

"The Farmers' Road runs two trains a day," said the station-master sententiously, as if he were speaking of some mighty empire. "The train consists, as you see, of a locomotive and a mixed car. The first train comes in here at nine o'clock in the morning, connecting with the local going east. It then returns to Bunkerville, and reaches here in the afternoon at three o'clock, to connect with the local going west. That little train doesn't know there are any flyers on our line; all it knows is that the eastern local comes in somewhere about nine o'clock in the morning, and the western local arrives anywhere between three and five in the afternoon. So a Chicago man can't step jauntily off the express he has managed to stop, and expect to get a train to Bunkerville whenever he chooses."

"Admirably stated," said Jack Steele. "And if you will condescend further to enlighten a beclouded intellect, would you mind explaining what the deuce the little train is doing here at this hour? If I follow your argument, it should have returned to Bunkerville after the nine o'clock local came in, and should not have arrived here until just before three o'clock."

"Your befogged brain is waking up," said the station-master encouragingly. "The phenomenon to which you have called

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"'Hallo, Joe! Don't you yearn for home and friends?'"

attention happens once or twice a week. If you cast your eye to the other end of the platform, you will see piled there an accumulation of miscellaneous freight. The Farmers' Road has just dumped that upon us, and to do so has taken a special trip. That stuff will go east on Number Eight, which is a freight train that will stop here some time in the afternoon when it sees the signal set against it."

"I comprehend," said Jack; "and I venture on my next proposition with great diffidence, caused by increasing admiration of yourself and the lucid mind you bring to bear on Western railway procedure. If I have followed your line of argument as unerringly as the farmers' train follows the Farmers' Road, his nibs the engineer must take the train back to Bunkerville so that he may return here on his regular trip to meet the three o'clock western local. If I am right, what is to prevent him from going now, taking me with him, and giving me an opportunity at Bunkerville to transact my business and catch the regular train back? for I am going further west, and would like to intercept the local, which would save me spending an unnecessary night at Bunkerville, and wasting most of to-morrow as well."

"The reasons are as follows. His nibs, as you call him, is engineer, conductor, brakesman, and freight handler. When he came in, he had to carry that freight from his car to the platform where you see it. That takes time, even if the day were not so oppressively hot as it is. So, instead of keeping up his fire under the boiler, and burning useless coal, he banks the furnace as soon as he

arrives. Then he takes his time bringing the boxes to the platform. If he returned to Bunkerville, they would give him something to do there: here he is out of reach; besides, he would have to draw his fires, and start anew about two o'clock, and that he doesn't want to do. He has, therefore, curled himself up in the passenger car, put a newspaper over his face to keep off the flies, and has gone to sleep. When the proper moment arrives, he will stir up his fire, go to Bunkerville, and then be ready to make the return trip on one expenditure of coal. *Now* do you understand?"

"Yes, thank you, I do; and this has given me an idea."

"That's a good thing, and I can easily guess what your idea is. But before putting it into operation, I should like to mitigate a slight you have put on Slocum Junction. You made a sarcastic remark about cool drinks. Now, I beg to inform you that the nine o'clock local from the west slides off on this here platform every morning a great big square cold chunk of ice. That chunk of ice is growing less and less in a big wooden pail in the telegraph-office, but the water that surrounds it is as cold as the North Pole. If you have anything in your hip pocket or in that natty little valise which mitigates the rigour of cold water, there's no reason why you shouldn't indulge in a refreshing drink."

"Station-master," said Jack, laughing, "you ought to be superintendent of this road, instead of junction boss. You're the wisest man I've met in two years."

Saying this, he sprang the catch of the handbag and drew forth a bulky, wicker-covered, silver-topped flask.

"I propose we adjourn to the telegraph-office," he added, "and investigate that wooden pail."

The station-master led the way with an alacrity that he had not heretofore exhibited. The result of the conference was cheerful and refreshing.

"Now," said the station-master, drawing the back of his hand across his lips, "what you want is a special train to Bunkerville. A man from the city would get that by telegraphing to the superintendent at the terminus and paying twenty dollars. A man from the country who had some sense would go to Joe the engineer and persuade him he ought to wake up and return to Bunkerville at once."

"How much would be required to influence Joe?"

"Oh, a couple of dollars would be wealth. A silver dollar in front of each eye will obscure the whole western prairie if placed just right."

"Very well, I'll go out and place 'em."

"You are forgetting your flask," said the station-master, as Mr. Steele snapped shut his valise.

"No, I'm not. That flask and its contents belong to you, as a reward for being patient and instructive when a darned fool let loose from the city happened your way."

And this showed Jack Steele to be a reader of his fellow-man; for while the engineer might accept the two dollars, the independent station-master certainly would not have done so. That glib official, however, seemed to have no particular words for this occasion, so he changed the subject and said—

"If you persuade Joe to go, I wish you'd remember the lady in the waiting-room. She's a Miss Dorothy Slocum, and a powerful nice girl, that teaches school in Bunkerville. Fact is, this junction was named after her father. Used to be the principal man round these parts; but he lost his money, and now his girl's got to teach school. I never knew him—he was dead long before I came here. She's been visiting relatives. This is vacation time, you know."

"All right. You tell her there's a special leaving in a few minutes, and that she's very welcome to ride upon it."

With that Jack Steele went out into the furnace of the sun across the dusty road and entered the composite car. The Farmers' Road did not join rails with the main line, and so caused much extra handling of freight. The engine stood there simmering in the heat, both external and internal, a slight murkiness of smoke rising from its funnel, shaped like an inverted bell.

"Hallo, Joe!" cried Steele, as he entered the car. "Don't you yearn for home and friends?"

The man was sprawling on two seats, with a newspaper over his head, as the station-master had predicted.

"Hallo!" he echoed, sitting up and shaking away the sheet of paper, "what's the matter?"

"Nothing, except that if the spirit should move you to get over to Bunkerville with this ancient combination, five dollars will be transferred from my pocket into yours."

"'Nough said," cried Joe, rising to his feet. "It'll take me about twenty minutes to get the pot boiling again. You don't happen to have the fiver about you, I suppose? I haven't seen one for a couple of years."

"Here you are," replied Steele, drawing a crisp bill from his purse.

The engineer thrust it into the pocket of his greasy overall.

"I'll toot the whistle when I'm ready," he said.

This financial operation accomplished, John Steele returned to the station. The station-master was standing by the door of the waiting-room conversing pleasantly with someone within. Jack Steele pushed past him and was amazed to see so pretty a girl sitting on the bench that ran round the bare walls of the uninviting room.

"'Miss Slocum, this is Mr. John Steele, of Chicago.'"

"Will you introduce me?" inquired the city man, handing his card to the station-master.

"Miss Slocum," said the latter, "this is Mr. John Steele, of Chicago."

The young man removed his fashionable straw hat.

"Miss Slocum," he said, "I desire to apologise to you. I'm afraid that when I found myself stranded on the platform outside, I used language which can hardly be justified, even in the circumstances. But I had no idea at the time that there was a lady within miles of us."

"I was much interested in my book," replied the girl, with a smile, "and was not paying attention to what was going on outside."

She held up a book, between whose leaves her forefinger was placed.

"Well, Miss Slocum, it must have been a pretty absorbing story, and I am deeply grateful to it for acting as a non-conductor between my impulsive observations and your hearing. Nothing excuses intemperate language, as the station-master here has taught me through the force of a benign example. Still, if anything could exculpate a man, I should think it would be the exasperating conduct of this Farmers' Railroad, as they call it."

"Indeed," said Miss Dorothy archly, "the book had really no right to interfere, because I am one of the owners of the railway, and so perhaps it was my duty to listen to complaints of a passenger. Not that I have anything to do with the management of the line; I am compelled to pay my fare just like the rest."

"I should be delighted if you would accept a ride on your own road as free as if you carried a superintendent's pass. I am going to Bunkerville in my own private car, as it were, and shall feel honoured if I may extend the courtesies of the same."

"The station-master has just told me you were kind enough to offer a poor vagrant a lift to Bunkerville. I wished to buy a ticket, but this haughty official of the main line so despises our poor little road that he will not sell me one."

"Indeed," said the station-master, "I haven't the power, nor the tickets. They don't entrust me with any business so tremendous. Joe starts his rickety engine

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going, then leaves it to jog along as it likes, and comes through the car to collect the fares. They have no tickets, and perhaps that's why the road has never paid a dividend."

"Oh, you mustn't say that!" protested the girl. "Poor Joe has not got rich out of his occupation, any more than the shareholders have made money on their shares. If you will permit me to pay my fare to Joe, Mr. Steele, I shall be only too happy to take this early opportunity of getting to Bunkerville."

"I couldn't think of it, Miss Slocum; in fact, I must prohibit any communication between Joe and yourself, fearing you, as an owner of the road, may learn by what corrupt practices I induced Joe to make the trip."

The girl laughed, but before she could reply, a wheezy "Toot-toot!" outside announced that Joe had already got steam up.

"I'll carry your valise across," said the obliging station-master, while Miss Dorothy Slocum picked up her lighter belongings and accompanied Mr. John Steele to the shabby little passenger-car. Joe was leaning out with a grin on his smeared face, which was there probably because of the five-dollar bill in his trousers pocket. The station-master placed the valise in the baggage section of the car, and raised his tattered hat as the little train started gingerly out for the open country.

It was a pretty landscape through which they passed, with little to indicate that the prairies were so near at hand. The line ran along a shallow valley, well wooded, especially by the banks of the stream that wandered through it, which even at this parched season of the year was still running its course with clear water in it, and Miss Slocum informed the Chicago man that it flowed from a never-drying spring some ten miles on the other side of the main line. The little road was as crooked as possible, for the evident object of its constructors had been to avoid bridging the stream, piling up any high embankments, or excavating deep cuttings. The pace, therefore, was exceedingly slow; nevertheless, John Steele did not find the time hang heavily on his hands. At first the girl seemed somewhat shy and embarrassed to find herself the only passenger except this gallant young business man; but he tactfully put her at her ease by pretending much interest in the history of the road, with which he soon learned she was somewhat unfortunately familiar.

"Yes," she said, "the building of this road was the greatest financial disaster that ever occurred in this section of the country. My father was one of its chief promoters. When the Wheat Belt Line, by which you came here from Chicago, was surveyed through this part of the State, those interested in the neighbourhood expected that it would run through Bunkerville, which would become a large town. The railway people demanded a large money bonus, which Bunker county refused, because Bunkerville was in the direct line, and they thought the railway must come through there, whether a bonus were paid or not. In fact, the first survey passed just north of Bunkerville. But our poor little village was not so important as its inhabitants imagined, and the next line surveyed was twenty miles away. For once the farmers were too shrewd. They thought, as they put it, that the new line was a bluff, and did not realise their mistake until too late. My father had been in favour of granting the bonus, but he was out-voted. Perhaps that is why the railway people called their station Slocum instead of Bunkerville, which was twenty miles distant. The next nearest railway line was forty-five miles away, and two years after the Wheat Belt Line began operations, it was proposed to organise a local company to construct a railway from Slocum, through Bunkerville to Jamestown, on the other line. Bonuses were granted all along the route, and besides this the State legislature gave a subsidy, and, furthermore, passed a Bill to prevent competition, prohibiting any railway to parallel the Farmers' Road for sixty miles on either side."

"Does that law still stand on the statute books of the State?" asked Steele, with increasing interest.

"I think so. It has never been repealed to my knowledge."

"Well, I should doubt its being constitutional. Why, that ties up more than seven thousand square miles of the State into a hard knot, and prevents it from having the privilege of further railway communication."

"In a measure it does," said the girl. "You may run as many lines as you like north and south, but not east and west."

"It's a wonder the Wheat Belt Line didn't contest that law," said Steele.

"Well, I've been told that this law is entirely in the interests of the Wheat Belt Line, although the farmers didn't think so when they voted for the Bill. You see, the Wheat Belt Line was already in operation

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east and west, and could not be affected by that Act, and, of course, the same Bill which prevented competition to the Farmers' Road also, in a measure, protected the Wheat Belt Line through the same district."

"By Jove!" said Steele, his eyes glistening, "this is a proposition which contains some peculiar points. Well, go on, what happened?"

"Oh, disaster happened. In spite of the legislation and bonuses, the road was a complete failure, and ruined all who were deeply interested in it. The farmers subscribed stock to the amount of something like a hundred thousand dollars, but this money, with the sum of the legislative grant and the bonuses, was all swallowed up in the first twenty miles, and in getting the rolling-stock and equipment, such as it is. The line was never pushed through to Jamestown, and there arose litigation about some of the bonuses that had been paid, and, all in all, it was a most disastrous business. It was hoped that the Wheat Belt Line would come to the rescue and buy the unfinished road, but they would not look at it. This section has never paid a dividend, and is supposed to be doing well when it produces enough money for expenses and repairs. The shares can now be bought for five cents on the dollar, or less."

"How much of it do you possess, Miss Slocum?"

"I have a thousand shares, and my father told me not to part with them, because he was certain that some day they would be valuable."

For a few moments there was silence in the car, and the girl, glancing up at her companion, found his ardent gaze fixed upon her with an intensity that was embarrassing. She flushed slightly and turned her head to look out of the window at the familiar scenery they were passing. It would have surprised the young man could he have read the thoughts that occupied the mind of this extremely pretty and charmingly modest girl who sat opposite him. Here is practically what she said to herself—

"I am tired of this deadly dull village in which I live, and here, at last, is a way out. I read in his eyes the beginning of admiration. He shall be the youthful Moses to lead me into the Promised Land. Through this lucky meeting I shall attain the city if I but play my cards rightly."

It would have astonished the girl if she had known what was in the man's mind. The ardent gaze was not for her, as she had supposed. Although he appeared to be looking directly at her, he was in reality almost ignorant of her presence, and saw unfolded before him a scene far beyond her—the whole range of the eastern States. The power that enabled him to stop the fast express at Slocum Junction gave a hint of Steele's position in the railway world to the station-master, but it conveyed no meaning to the girl. It was his business to be intimately acquainted with the railway situation in north-western America, and that involved the knowledge of what was going on in the eastern States. He knew that the Rockervelt system was making for somewhere near this point, and that, ultimately, it would need to cross the State, in spite of the opposition it must meet from the Wheat Belt Line. Whoever possessed the Farmers' bankrupt road held the right of way across the State, so far as a belt of one hundred and twenty miles was concerned. It seemed incredible that Rockervelt, this Napoleon of the railway world, should be ignorant of the obstacle that lay in his path. Rockervelt was in the habit of buying legislatures and crushing opposition; still, he never spent money where it was not required, and it would be infinitely cheaper to buy the Farmers' Road, and thus secure the privileges pertaining to it, than to purchase the repeal of the obstructing law. At that moment Jack Steele determined to camp across the path of the conqueror. If Napoleon accepted battle, Jack was under no delusion as to the result. The name of Steele would disappear from the roll of rising young men in Chicago, and he would have to begin at the bottom of the ladder again. However, he knew that Napoleon's eye was fixed on the Pacific coast, and that he never wasted time in a fight if a reasonable expenditure of money would cause the enemy to withdraw. Steele calculated that he could control the road for something under three thousand dollars, which would give him the majority of the stock at the price the girl had named. That was a mere bagatelle. Then he would withdraw from Rockervelt's front for anything between three hundred thousand dollars and half a million.

A sigh from the girl brought him to a realisation of his neglect of social duties, and the brilliant vision of loot faded from his eyes.

"What pretty scenery we are passing!" he said. "The wooded dell, and the sparkling little rivulet running through it. It is sweet and soothing after the rush and turmoil of a great city. It must be a delight to live here."

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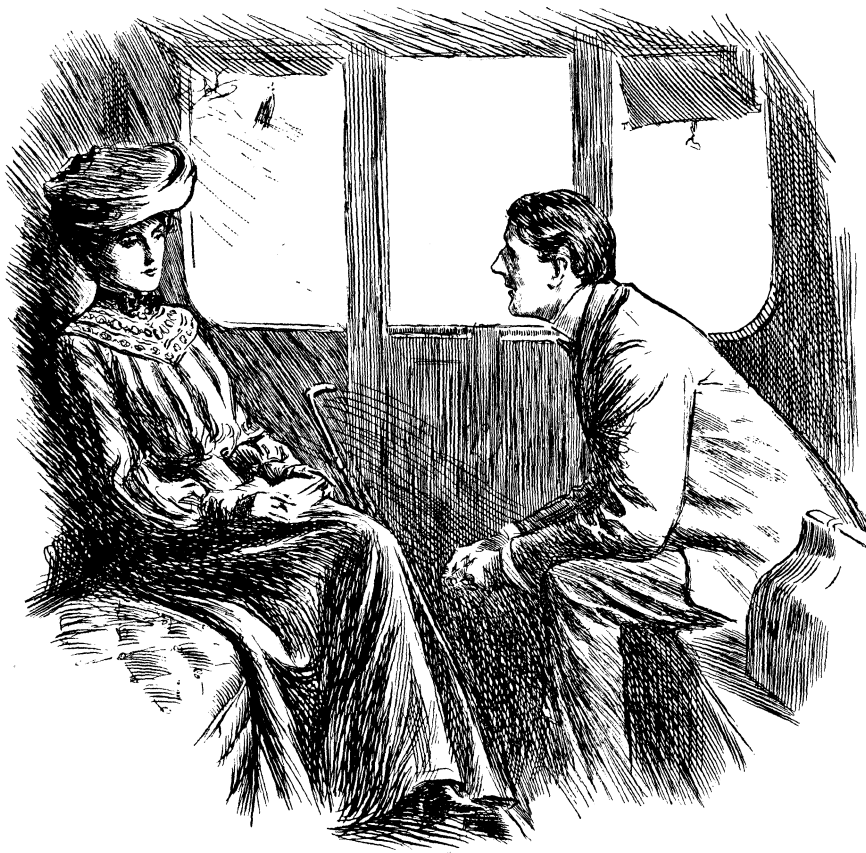

"'I have a thousand shares, and my father told me not to part with them.'"

"Indeed it isn't!" cried the girl; "it is horrid! Deadly dull, utterly commonplace, with little chance of improving the mind, and none at all for advancing one's material condition. I loathe the life and yearn for the city."

As she said this, she bestowed upon him a fascinating glimpse of a pair of lovely eyes, and veiled within them he saw what he took to be a tender appeal for sympathy and, perhaps, for help. After all, he was a young man, and perhaps that glance had carried a hypnotic suggestion to his very soul; and, added to all this, the girl was undoubtedly beautiful.

"Really," he said, leaning forward towards her, "I think that might be managed, you know."

"Do you?" she asked, looking him full in the face.

At that interesting moment the car slowly came to a standstill at a wooden platform, and Joe thrust open the door and shouted—

"Here you are! Bunkerville!"

Dorothy Slocum held out her hand shyly to John Steele as she bade him "Good-bye." She thanked him once more for allowing her to ride on the special train, and added—

"If you ever come to Bunkerville again, I hope you will not forget me."

"Forget you!" cried the enthusiastic young man. "I think you entirely underrate the attractions of Bunkerville. It seems to me a lovely village. But I shall visit it again—not because of itself, but for the reason that a certain Miss Dorothy lives here."

To this complimentary speech Miss Slocum made no reply, but she laughed and blushed in a manner very becoming to her, and somehow managed to leave an impression on Mr. Steele's mind that she was far from being displeased at the words he had uttered.

When she had gone, the traveller asked Joe where the office of Mr. Hazlett, the lawyer, was situated; and being directed, he was speedily in the presence of the chief legal functionary that Bunkerville possessed. Steele had a

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considerable amount of money lent upon Bunkerville business property, and his lawyer had written him that as times were backward, there was some difficulty in persuading the debtors to meet the requirements of the mortgages. If the mortgages were foreclosed and the property sold, Hazlett did not think it would produce the money that had been borrowed upon it, and so Steele had informed him that he would drop off at Bunkerville on his way west, and see his security for himself.

The lawyer had been expecting him on the regular train, and so was not at the station to meet him. If Hazlett had expected a visit from a hard old skinflint, resolved on having his pound of financial flesh, he must have been somewhat surprised to greet a smiling young fellow who seemed to be thinking of anything but the property in question.

"We will just walk down the street," said the lawyer, "and I'll show you the buildings."

"All right," said Steele, "if it doesn't take too long; for I must catch the three o'clock local at Slocum Junction."

During their walk together, Steele paid but the scantest interest to the edifices pointed out to him, and the lawyer soon found he was not even listening to the particulars he so circumstantially gave.

"Do you know anything about the Farmers' Railway?" was the question Steele shot at him in the midst of a score of reasons why it was better not to foreclose at the present moment.

"I know all about it," said the lawyer. "I have done the legal business of the road from its commencement."

"Have you a list of the shareholders?"

"I hold a partial list; but shares have changed hands a good deal, and sometimes no notification has been given me, which is contrary to law."

"I was told to-day that shares can be bought at five cents on the dollar. Is that true?"

"Many shares have been sold at that price; some for less, some for more."

"What is the total number of shares?"

"A hundred thousand."

"Could fifty thousand and an odd share be bought?"

"Do you mean to get control of the road? Yes, I suppose it might be done if you weren't in a hurry, and it was gone about quietly. Some farmers in the outlying districts refuse to sell, thinking the price of the stock will rise, which of course it won't do. Nevertheless, I imagine there should be no difficulty in collecting the fifty-one thousand shares."

"What would it cost?"

"Anywhere between three and five thousand dollars—all depending, as I said, on the thing being done circumspectly, for in these rural communities the wildest rumours get afloat, and so, if it became known that someone was in the market, prices would go up."

"Well, I have in my mind exactly the man to do the trick with discretion, and his name is Hazlett. I will lodge in the bank here five thousand dollars in your name, and I depend on you to get me at least one share over the fifty thousand, although, to be on the safe side, you may purchase at least a thousand in excess. Send the shares to me in Chicago as fast as you get them, and I'll take care of them."

"Very well, Mr. Steele, I shall do the best I can."

"We will return to your office now, Hazlett, and I'll give you the cheque. In these matters it's just as well not to lose any time."

"There's another building I want to show you, about five hundred yards down the street."

"We won't mind it to-day. I have determined to take your advice and not foreclose at the present moment. Let's get back to your office, for I mustn't miss Joe's train."

After Steele had returned to Chicago, shares in the Farmers' Railroad began to drop in on him in bulky packages, which he duly noted and placed in a safe deposit. Presently the packages became smaller and smaller, but as the total had already reached forty-nine thousand six hundred and thirty, Steele was not alarmed until he received the following letter from Hazlett:—

"DEAR MR. STEELE,—

"About two weeks ago I became suspicious that somebody else was buying shares of the Farmers' Road. I came across at that time several people who had sold, although they did not know to whom; and a few days ago a young man called upon me to know if I had any shares for sale. I told him I had none, and as I showed very little interest in the matter, I got some information, and find that a man named Dunham, of New York, is the buyer, and apparently he has agents all over the country trying to purchase shares. I would have telegraphed this information to you were it not for the

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fact that our telegraph-office is a little leaky, and also because I thought I had the game in my own hands. A young woman in this town, a teacher, Dorothy Slocum by name, possesess a thousand shares, which I felt certain I could purchase for a reasonable figure. I began at ten cents, but she refused, and finally raised to fifty cents, and then a dollar. Higher than that I could not take the responsibility of going without direct authority from you. To my amazement, she has informed me to-day that she has been offered ten thousand dollars for her stock. I obtained her promise that she will not sell for a week. She telegraphed her decision to Dunham, and has received an answer from him saying he is on his way to see her. I learn from Miss Slocum that she is acquainted with you, and I surmise, without being certain, that you personally will prove the successful negotiator if you are on the spot. This letter should reach you in time to enable you to reach here at least as soon as Dunham, and I advise prompt action on your part if we are to secure that thousand shares. If you cannot come, telegraph me any one of the following words, and I shall understand I am authorised to offer the amount set down opposite that word.

"Yours most sincerely,

"JAMES P. HAZLETT."

There followed this a dozen words, signifying amounts from ten thousand dollars upwards.

Lawyer Hazlett received a telegram: "Will reach Slocum Junction at twelve to-morrow. Arrange special train on the Farmers' Road to Bunkerville to be at Junction.—STEELE."

The moment Dunham's name caught Jack Steele's eye in the lawyer's letter, he knew he had to deal with the most unscrupulous man in the railway business, which is saying much. Dunham was in the employ of the Rockervelt system, and, as far as money was concerned, could outbid him a thousand to one.

When the Greased Lightning Express stopped at Slocum Junction on this occasion, John Steele had ample time to reach the platform, because the express detached itself from a sumptuous private car before it pursued its journey further west.

"Aha!" said Jack to himself, "friend Dunham travels in style."

The station-master greeted Steele with the cordiality of an old friend.

"Here is a letter which lawyer Hazlett sent out to be handed to you as soon as you arrived, and wished you to read it at once."

Steele tore open the envelope and read:—

"I am sorry about the special train, but Dunham had telegraphed from New York ordering it before your wire came. I have arranged, however, that Joe will return at once for you, as soon as he has landed Dunham in Bunkerville. This will make no difference in the negotiations; Miss Slocum has promised to be away from home when Dunham calls, and will see you first. I think you've got the inside track, although I surmise the young woman is well aware that she holds the key to the situation. I don't know if she's after all the money she can get, or whether there is something of friendliness in her action. I rather suspect the latter, and I think you can conclude negotiations before she sees Dunham at all.

"Yours most sincerely,

"JAMES P. HAZLETT."

Jack Steele gave no expression to the annoyance he felt at missing the special. He distrusted the lawyer's optimism, and like a flash resolved to be in Bunkerville as soon as his antagonist. Dunham had stepped down from his private car, asked the station-master where the special was to be found, and quickly ordered his car to be placed on a side track. When he had entered the Bunkerville composition car, and Joe had started up his wheezy engine, Steele darted from the shadow of the station, caught the car, and sat down on the rear steps outside, well concealed from the sight of anyone unless that person stood by the end window. All went well until they were about five miles from Bunkerville, when Steele thought he recognised a lady's figure on the highway ahead, and forgetting that he might expose himself to the sharp eyes of Dunham, he rose to his feet, clutched the stanchions, and leaned forward. An instant later the rear door was thrown open, a foot was planted energetically in the small of Steele's back, and that young man went hurtling over the embankment, head over heels. There were no half measures with Dunham. Steele sat up bruised and dazed, not knowing whether he was hurt seriously, or had escaped practically unscathed, which latter proved to be the case. It seemed to him, as he fell through the air, he heard a woman's scream. When he was somewhat stupidly debating whether this was real or imaginary, his doubts were solved by a voice he recognised.

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"'Suppose we talk business first, and indulge in sentiment after?' said the girl."

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"Oh, Mr. Steele, are you hurt? What a brutal thing for that villain to have done!"

"Why, Miss Dorothy, you of all persons! And here was I trying to sneak into Bunkerville to see you first. I thought you were teaching school?"

"Not on Saturdays, Mr. Steele," said the girl, laughing. "I see, after all, you are not very much hurt."

"I'm all right, I think. Fortunately Joe doesn't run sixty miles an hour. Dorothy, I want you to marry me and come to Chicago."

Again the girl laughed.

"Dear me," she said. "I thought you had come to buy my stock. I couldn't think of taking advantage of a proposal that had been literally shaken out of a man. I'm afraid your mind is wandering a bit."

"My mind was never clearer in its life. What is your answer, Dorothy?"

She sat down beside him, still laughing a little. The rivulet was at their feet, the railway embankment behind them, the highway, shrouded by trees, in front.

"Suppose we talk business first, and indulge in sentiment after?" said the girl, with a roguish twinkle in her eye. "I have been offered ten thousand dollars for my shares. Are you prepared to pay as much?"

"Yes."

"I imagine Mr. Dunham would never have come all the way from New York to see me if he were not prepared to pay a much larger sum. I have therefore two further provisos to make. You will pay me ten thousand down. Proviso number one is that you will give me ten per cent. on the profits you make in this transaction. Of course, in spite of Mr. Hazlett's caution, I know there is something very large going on, and naturally I wish to profit by it."

"You are quite right, Miss Slocum, and I agree to the ten per cent. suggestion; in fact, I offered you a hundred per cent. in the beginning, and myself into the bargain, which proposal you have ignored. What is the second proviso?"

"I am told you have a great deal of influence in railway circles in Chicago."

"Yes, I have."

"Can you get a good place for a capable and deserving young man?"

"I think so. Does he understand railroading?"

"Yes, he is the station-master at Slocum Junction."

"Oh, the station-master! Certainly. I should be delighted to offer him a good position. He is a splendid fellow, and I like him exceedingly."

"I am charmed to hear you say so," said Dorothy, with downcast eyes, pulling a flower and picking it to pieces; "for that brings us to the sentiment, and I show my confidence in you and the great esteem in which I hold you, by telling you this strict secret—that I am engaged to be married to the station-master, and am anxious to get to Chicago."

A VOICE.

SUMMER sings at the door! Oh, it's up my heart and away
From this empty house of Love with its dust of yesterday!
Abroad is a glad, wild wind and riot of blossoming,
And the room where we sit is dull, a cheerless and sunless thing;
Now throw we the casement wide and hear and heed and obey.

Life is loud on the hills, and the harlequin blooms are gay.
Let us out from this shrouded place as long-caged birds may wing;
The Winter hath known our tears, but now, in the steps of Spring,
Summer sings at the door.

For mourner of Love no more, but lover of Life I stay,
Till the red blood fails to leap and joy is a thing gone grey,
I come from a haunted house—my grief to your winds I fling;
Oh, Earth of the mother-heart, be good to the soul I bring:
I hear your peace in her voice, your call in her roundelay—
Summer sings at the door!

THEODOSIA GARRISON.

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LITTLE WARHORSE:

THE STORY OF A JACK-RABBIT

By ERNEST THOMPSON SETON.*

THE Little Warhorse knew practically all the dogs in town. First, there was a very large, brown dog that had pursued him many times, a dog that he always got rid of by slipping through a small hole in a board fence. Second, there was a small, active dog that could follow through that hole, and him he baffled by leaping a twenty-foot irrigation ditch that had steep sides and a swift current. The dog could not make this leap. It was sure medicine for him, and the boys still call that place "Jacky's Jump." But there was a greyhound that could leap better than the jack, and when he could not follow through a fence, he could jump over it. He tried the Warhorse's mettle more than once, and the jack only saved himself by his quick dodging, till they got to an Osage hedge, and here the greyhound had to give it up. Besides this there was in town a rabble of big and little dogs that were troublesome, but easily left behind in the open.

"The Little Warhorse knew practically all the dogs in town."

In the country there was a dog at each farmhouse, but only one that the Warhorse really feared—that was a big, fierce half-greyhound, a creature so swift and pertinacious that he had several times forced the Warhorse to his final shifts to escape.

For the town cats he cared little; only once or twice had he been threatened by them. A huge tom-cat, flushed with many victories, came crawling up to where he fed one moonlit night. The Warhorse saw the black creature with the glowing eyes, and a moment before the final rush he faced it, raised up on his haunches—his hind-legs—at full length on his toes, with his broad ears towering up yet six inches higher; then letting out a loud "*Churrr—churrr*"—his best attempt at a roar—he sprang five feet forward and landed on the cat's head, driving in his sharp hind-nails, and the old tom fled in terror from the weird two-legged giant. This trick he had tried several times with success, but twice it turned out a sad failure—once when the cat proved to be a mother whose kittens were near—then Jack Warhorse had to flee for his life; and the other time was when he made the mistake of landing hard on a skunk.

* * * * *

But the greyhound was the dangerous enemy, and in him the Warhorse might have found his fate but for a curious adventure with a happy ending for the jack.

He fed by night; there were fewer enemies about then, and it was easier to hide; but one day at dawn in winter he had lingered long at an alfalfa stack, and was crossing the open snow towards his forest form, when, as ill-luck would have it, he met the greyhound prowling outside the town. With open snow and growing daylight there was no chance to hide—nothing but a run in the open, with soft snow that hindered the jack more than it did the hound.

Away they went—superb runners in fine fettle. How they skimmed across the snow, raising it in little puff—puff—puffs each time their nimble feet went down! This way and that, swerving and dodging, went the chase. Everything favoured the dog; his empty stomach, the cold weather, the soft snow; while the rabbit was also handicapped by his heavy meal of alfalfa. But his feet went puff—puff so fast that a dozen of the little snow-jets were in view at once.

The chase continued in the open, no friendly hedge was near, and every attempt

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to reach a fence was cleverly stopped by the hound. Jack's ears were losing their bolt up-cock, a sure sign of failing heart or wind, when all at once these flags went boldly up, as under sudden renewal of strength. The Warhorse put forth all his power, not to reach the hedge to the north, but over the open prairie eastward. The greyhound followed, and within fifty yards the jack dodged to foil his fierce pursuer; but on the next tack he was on his eastern course again; and so, tacking and dodging, he kept the line direct for the next farm-house, where was a very high board fence with a hen-hole, and where also there dwelt his other hated enemy, the big, black dog. An outer hedge delayed the greyhound for a minute, and gave Jack time to dash through the hen-hole into the yard, where he hid to one side. The greyhound rushed around to the low gate, leaped over that among the hens, and as they fled cackling and fluttering, some lambs bleated loudly, and their natural guardian, the big, black dog, ran to the rescue, and Warhorse slipped out again by the hole at which he had entered. Horrible sounds of dog hate and fury were heard behind him in the henyard, and how it ended he did not know, but it was remarkable that he never afterwards was troubled by the swift greyhound that one time lived in Newchusen.

Newchusen was a ramshackle Western town. The surrounding region of Kaskado had been settled very quickly a few years before, and the railroad coming through had caused a gathering of about one hundred miserable shanties, that sheltered a population whose main idea seemed to be to leave as soon as possible. The only beauty of the place was a few lines of hand-planted trees.

The country about was more interesting. It was cut up into small farms with their windmill pumps and Osage orange hedges in all directions. The changes made by the settlement had brought a great change to the jack-rabbits. Their natural enemies were driven out by unwise laws, the hedges and ditches helped to protect them, and they increased yearly in numbers. Their natural home was the open prairie, but, relying on their speed, the bolder ones did not hesitate to enter the barnyards and even the outskirts of the town.

The national colour of the jacks is the black-and-white marks on ears and tail. These marks are very large and bright in the finest jacks. Little Warhorse was one of those rare and gifted individuals that sometimes appear. He was often in the town, because the best forage was there, and his powers were high enough to justify his boldness, while his coat and markings, so dull in his duller kindred, shone, as he ran like charcoal on drifted snow.

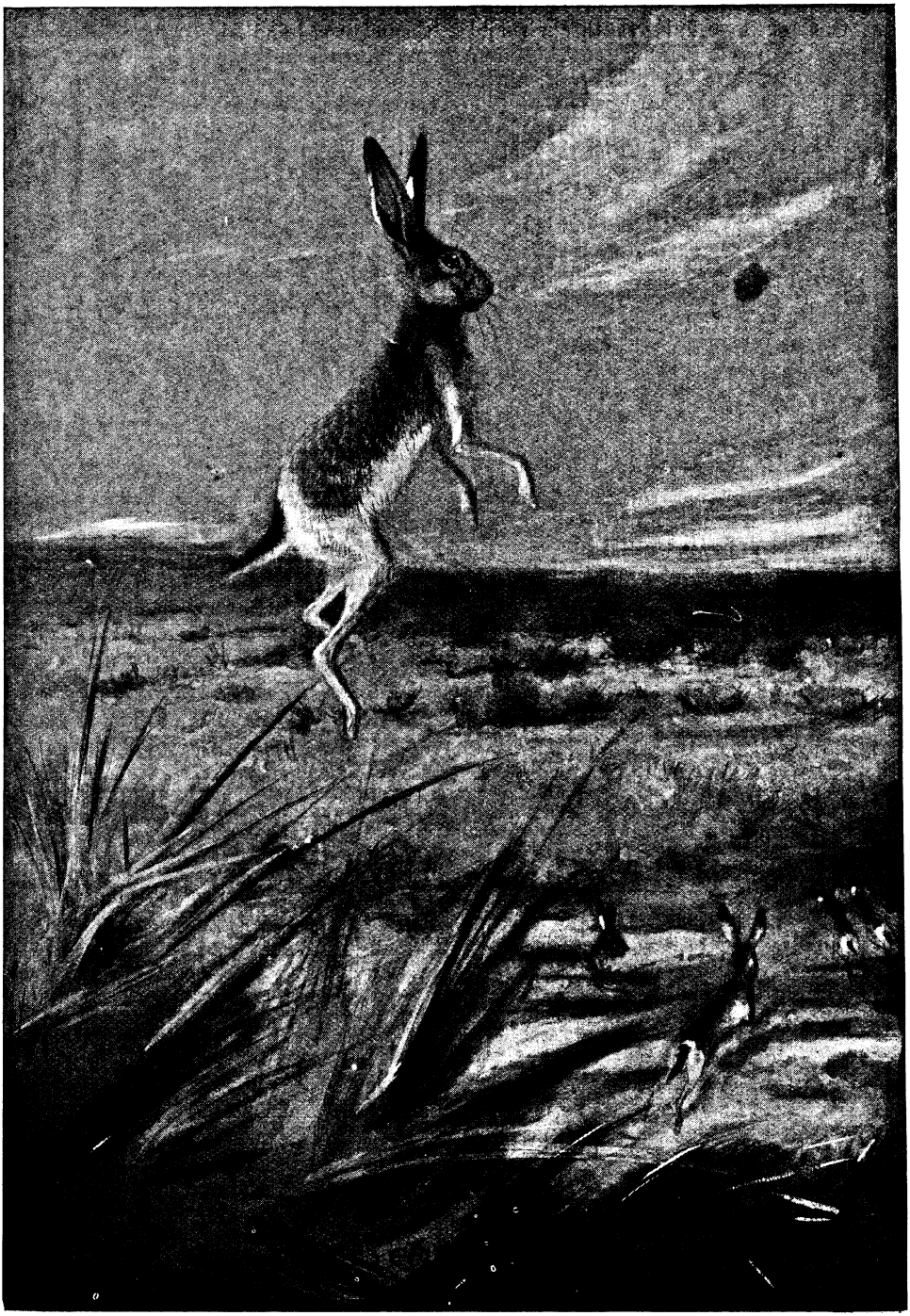
* * * * *

Next summer was a wonderful year for the jack-rabbits. A foolish law had set a bounty on hawks and owls, and had caused a general massacre of these feathered policemen; consequently the rabbits had multiplied in such numbers that they now were threatening to devastate the country.

The farmers, who were the sufferers from the bounty law, as well as the makers of it, decided on a great rabbit-drive. All the county was invited to come on a given morning to the main road north of the county, with the intention of sweeping the whole region upwind, and at length driving the rabbits into a huge corral of close wire netting. Dogs were barred as unmanageable, and guns as dangerous among a crowd, but every man and boy carried a couple of long sticks and a bagful of stones. Women came on horseback and in buggies; many carried rattles or horns and old tins to make a noise. A number of the buggies trailed a string of old cans or tied some laths to scrape on the wheel spokes, and thus add no little to the deafening clatter of the drive. As rabbits have marvellously sensitive hearing, a noise that is distracting to mankind is likely to prove bewildering to them. The weather was favourable, and at eight in the morning the word to advance was given. The line was about five miles long at first, and there was a man or a boy every thirty or forty yards. The buggies and riders were almost entirely kept to the roads, but the drivers were supposed to face everything and keep the front right as a point of honour. The advance was roughly in three sides of a square. Each man made as much noise as he could, and threshed every bush in his path. A number of rabbits hopped out, some low skimming, some soaring high every few yards.

* * * * *

Ordinarily a jack running from danger makes one hop in four or five—straight up, so as to give a view over all near herbage. This is called an observation or sky-hop. The clever jacks took only one observation in eight or ten hops; the little fools wasted time by making one hop in three a sky-hop.



"A number of rabbits hopped out, some soaring high every few yards."

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Some seemed to suspect the danger ahead. Some made for the lines, to be at once assailed by a shower of stones that laid many low. One or two did get through and escape, but the majority were swept ahead of the drive. At first the number seen was small, but before three miles were covered the rabbits were running ahead in every direction. After five miles—and that took about three hours—the word for the wings to close in was given. The space between each man was closed up till it was less than ten feet, and the whole drive converged on the corral within its two long guide-wings, or fences: the end lines joined these wings, and the surround was complete. The drivers closed in rapidly now, and scores of the rabbits were killed as they ran too near the drivers. Their bodies strewed the ground, but the swarms seemed to increase, and in the final move before the victims were cooped up in the corral, the two-acre space surrounded was a whirling mass of driving, jumping, bounding rabbits. Round and round they circled and leaped, looking for a chance to escape; but the inexorable crowd grew thicker as the ring grew steadily smaller, and the whole swarm was forced along the chute into the tight corral, some to squat stupidly in the middle, some to race around the outer wall, some to seek hiding in corners or under each other.

And the Little Warhorse—where was he in all this? The drive had swept him along, and he had been one of the first to enter the corral. But a curious sort of selection had been established. The pen was to be a death-trap for the rabbits, except the best, the soundest—and many were those that were unsound. Those that think of all wild animals as pure and perfect things would have been shocked to see how many halt, maimed, and diseased there were in that pen of four or five thousand jack-rabbits. It was a Roman victory—the rabbits of prisoners were to be butchered. The choicest were to be reserved for the arena. The arena? Yes; that was the coursing-park.

"Rabbits take their troubles lightly."

In that corral trap, prepared beforehand for the rabbits, were placed a number of small boxes along the wall—a whole series of them, five hundred at least, each large enough to hold one jack.

In the last rush of the drive the swiftest jacks first reached the pen. Some were swift and silly; they got to the pen and rushed wildly round and round; some were swift and wise: they at once sought the hiding afforded by the little boxes, all now full. Five hundred of the swiftest and wisest had been selected thus—not by any means an infallible way, but the simplest and readiest. These five hundred were destined to be run by greyhounds. The surging mass of over four thousand were ruthlessly given to slaughter.

Five hundred little boxes with five hundred bright-eyed jack-rabbits were put on the train that day, and among them was Little Jack Warhorse.

* * * * *

Rabbits take their troubles lightly, and it is not to be supposed that any great terror was felt by the boxed jacks, once the uproar of the massacre was over; and when they reached the coursing-park near the great city and were turned out one by one, very gently—yes, gently; the Roman guards were careful of their prisoners, being responsible for them—the jacks found little to complain of, a big enclosure with plenty of good food, and no enemies to annoy them.

The very next morning their training began. A score of little doors were opened into a much larger field—the park. After a number of jacks had wandered out through these doors, a rabble of boys appeared and drove them back, pursuing them noisily until all were again in the great pen, called the haven. A few days of this taught the jack-rabbits that when pursued their safety was to get back by one of the hatches into the haven. Now the second lesson began. The whole band was driven by a side door into a long lane which led around three sides of the park into another pen at the far end. This was the starting-pen. Its door into the arena—that is, the park—was opened, the rabbits driven forth, and then a mob of boys and dogs in hiding burst forth and pursued

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them across the open. The whole army went bobbing and bounding away, some of the younger ones soaring in a sky-hop as a matter of habit; but low skimming ahead of them all was a gorgeous black-and-white one; clean-limbed and bright-eyed, he had attracted attention in the pen, but now in the field he led the band with easy lope that put him as far ahead of them all as they were ahead of the rabble of common dogs.

"Luk at that, would ye—but ain't he a Little Warhorse?" shouted a villainous-looking Irish stable-boy, and thus the rabbit was named.

When half-way across the course, the jacks remembered the haven, and all swept to it and in, like a snow-cloud over the drifts.

This was the second lesson—to lead straight for the haven as soon as driven from the pen. In a week all had learned it and were ready for the great annual meet of the coursing club.

The Little Warhorse was now well known to the grooms and hangers-on; his colours usually marked him clearly, and his leadership was in a measure recognised by the long-eared herd that fled with him. He figured more or less with the dogs in the talk and betting of the men.

"Wonder if old Dignam is going to enter Minkie this year?"

"Faix, an' if he does, I bet the Little Warhorse will take the gimp out av her and her running mate."

"I'll bet three to one that my old Jen will pick the Warhorse up before he passes the grand-stand," growled a dog-man.

"An' it's meself will take that bet in dollars," said Mickey; "an' moore than thot, Oi'll put up a hull month's stuff thot there ain't a dog in the mate that kin turrn the Warhorse wunst on the hull coorse."

So they wrangled and wagered, but each day as they put the rabbits through their paces there were those that believed that they had found a wonderful runner in the Little Warhorse, one that would give the best greyhounds something that is rarely seen—a straight, stern chase from start to grand-stand and haven.

* * * * *

The first morning of the meet dawned bright and promising. The grand-stand was filled with a city crowd. The usual types of a racecourse appeared in force. Here and there were to be seen the dog-grooms leading in leash single greyhounds or couples, shrouded in blankets, but showing their

"The dogs are paired off."

sinewy legs, their snaky necks, their shapely heads with long, reptilian jaws, and their quick, nervous yellow eyes—hybrids of natural force and human ingenuity, the most wonderful running machines ever made of flesh and blood. Their keepers guarded them like jewels, tended them like babies, and were careful not only to keep them from picking up odd eatables, but also to prevent their smelling unusual objects or allowing strangers to come too near. Large sums were wagered on these dogs, and a cunningly placed tack, a piece of doctored meat—yes, an artfully compounded smell—has been known to turn a superb young runner into a lifeless laggard, and to the owner this might spell *ruin*. The dogs entered in each class are paired off, as each contest is supposed to be a duel; the winners in the first series are then paired again. In each trial a jack is driven from the starting-pen; close by in one leash are the rival dogs, held by the slipper. As soon as the rabbit is well away, the man has to get the dogs evenly started and slip them together. On the field is the judge, scarlet-coated and well mounted. He follows the chase. The rabbit, mindful of his training, speeds across the open towards the haven in full view of the grand-stand. The dogs follow the jack; as the first one comes near enough to be dangerous the rabbit baulks him by dodging. Each time the rabbit is turned scores for the dog that did it, and a final point is made by the kill.

Sometimes the kill takes place within one hundred yards of the start—that means a poor jack; sometimes it happens in front of the grand-stand; but sometimes, on rare occasions, it happens that the jack goes sailing across the open park a good half-mile, and by dodging for time runs to safety in the haven. Four finishes are possible: a speedy kill; a speedy winning of the

haven; new dogs to relieve the first runners, who would suffer heart collapse in the terrific strain of the pace if kept up many minutes in hot weather; and a final resort for rabbits that by continued dodging defy and jeopardise the dogs and yet do not win the haven. This fourth fate is a loaded shot-gun.

There is just as much jockeying at a Kaskado coursing as at a Kaskado horse-race; just as many attempts at fraud, and it is just as necessary to have the judge and the slipper beyond suspicion.

* * * * *

The day before a meet, a man of diamonds saw Irish Mickey—by chance. A cigar was all that visibly passed, but it had a green wrapper that was slipped off before lighting. Then a word: "If you wuz slipper to-morrow, and it so came about that Dignam's Minkie gets done, well, it means another cigar."

"Faix, an' if I wuz slipper, I could load the dice so Minkie would niver score a p'int, but her runnin' mate would have the same bad luck."

"That so?" The diamond man looked interested. "All right, fix it so; it means two cigars."

Slipper Slyman had always dealt on the square—had scorned many approaches; that was well known. Most men believed in him, but there were some malcontents; and when a man with many gold seals approached the steward and formulated charges, serious and well backed, they must perforce suspend the slipper pending an inquiry; thus Mickey Doo reigned in his stead.

Mickey was poor and not over-scrupulous. Here was a chance to make a year's pay in a minute; nothing wrong about it—no harm to the dog, or the rabbit, either.

All jack-rabbits are much alike—everybody knows that. It was simply a question of choosing your jack.

The preliminaries were over. Fifty jacks had been run and killed. Now came the final for the cup—the cup and the enormous stakes.

Mickey had done his work satisfactorily—a fair slip given to every leash.

There were the couples in the fields. Minkie and her rival were first. Everything had been fair so far, and who can say that what followed was unfair? Mickey could free which jack he pleased.

"Number three!" he called to his partner.

Out leaped the Little Warhorse. Black and white his great V ears, easy and low his five-foot bounds; gazing wildly at the unwonted crowd about the park, he leaped high in one surprising sky-hop.

"Hrrrrrr!" shouted the slipper, and his partner rattled a stick on the fence. The Warhorse's bounds increased to eight or nine feet.

"Hrrrrrr!"—and they were ten or twelve feet. At thirty yards the hounds were slipped—an even slip: some thought it could have been done at twenty yards.

"Hrrrrrr! Hrrrrrr!" and the Warhorse was doing fourteen-foot leaps, not a sky-hop among them.

"Hrrrrrr!"—wonderful dogs: how they sailed! But drifting ahead of them like a white sea-bird or flying scud was the Warhorse. Away past the grand-stand. And the dogs—were they closing the gap or start? Closing! It was lengthening!

In less time than it takes to tell it, that black-and-white thistledown had drifted away through the haven door—the door so like that good old hen-hole—and the greyhounds pulled up amidst a roar of derision and cheers for the Little Warhorse.

How Mickey did laugh! How Dignam did swear! How the newspaper-men did scribble—scribble—scribble!

Next day there was a paragraph in all the papers:

WONDERFUL FEAT OF A JACK-RABBIT.

The Little Warhorse, as he has been styled, completely skunked two of the most famous dogs on the turf, etc.

There was a fierce wrangle among the dog-men. This was a tie, since neither of them had scored, and Minkie and her rival were allowed to run again, but that half-mile had been too hot, and they had no show at all for the cup.

Mickey met "Diamonds" next day—by chance.

"Have a cigar, Mickey?"

"Oi will thot, sor; faix, thim's so foine I'd loike two—thank ye, sor."

That was the beginning of Warhorse's fame. From that time he became the pride of the Irish boy. Slipper Slyman had been honourably reinstated, and Mickey reduced to the ranks of jack-starters, but that merely helped to turn his sympathies from the dogs to the rabbits—or, rather, to the Warhorse, for of all the five hundred that were brought in from the drive, he alone had achieved a real fame. There were several that crossed the arena to run again another day, but he alone had crossed the course without getting even a turn. Twice a week the meets took place;

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"Mickey could see that Jack's ears were sinking."

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forty or fifty jacks were killed each time, and the five hundred in the pen had been nearly all eaten in the arena.

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The Warhorse had run every day, and eacn time had made the haven. Mickey became wildly enthusiastic about his favourite's powers. He begot a positive affection for the clean-limbed racer, and stoutly maintained against all that it was a positive honour to a dog to be disgraced by such a jack.

It is a rare thing for the rabbit to cross the track at all; so when the jack did it six times without having to dodge, the papers took note of it, and after each meet there would appear a notice: "The Little Warhorse crossed again to-day: old-timers say it shows how our dogs are deteriorating."

After the sixth time the rabbit-keepers grew enthusiastic, and Mickey, commander-in-chief of the brigade, became intemperate in his admiration! "Be jabers! he has a right to be torned loose. He has won his freedom loike ivery Amerikin done," he added by way of appeal to the patriotism of the steward of the race, who was, of course, the real owner of the jacks.

"All right, Mick; if he gets across thirteen times, you can ship him back to his native land," was the reply.

"Shure, now, and won't you make it tin, sor?"

"No, no; I need him to take the conceit out of some of the new dogs that are coming."

"Thirteen toimes, and he is free, sor; it's a bargain."

A new lot of rabbits arrived about this time, and one of these was coloured much like Little Warhorse. He had no such speed, but to prevent mistakes Mickey caught his favourite by driving him into one of the padded shipping-boxes, and proceeded with the gatekeeper's punch to "earmark" him. The punch was sharp; a clear star was cut out of the thin flap, when Mickey exclaimed: "Faix, and Oi'll punch ivery time ye cross the coorse." So he cut six stars in a row.

"Thayer now, Warhorse, shure it's a free rabbit ye'll be when ye have yer thirteen stars loike our flag of liberty had when we got free."

Within a week the Warhorse had vanquished the new greyhounds and had stars enough to go round the right ear and begin on the left. In a week more the thirteen runs were completed, six stars in the right ear and seven in the left, and the newspapers had new material.

"Whoop!" How Mickey hoorayed! "And it's a free jack ye are, Warhorse! Thirteen always wuz a lucky number. I never knowed it to fail."

* * * * *

"Yes, I know I did," said the steward. "But I want to give him one more run. I have a bet on him against a new dog here. It won't hurt him now; he can do it. Oh, well. Here, now, Mickey, don't you get sassy. One run more this afternoon. The dogs run two or three times a day. Why not Jack?"

"They're not shtakin' thayre loives, sor."

"Oh, you get out!"

Many more rabbits had been added to the pen, large and small, peaceful and warlike, and one big buck of savage instincts, seeing Jack Warhorse's hurried dash into the haven that morning, took advantage of the moment to attack him.

At another time Jack would have thumped his skull as he once did the cat's, and settled the affair in a minute, but now it took several minutes, during which he himself got roughly handled; so when the afternoon came, he was suffering from several bruises and stiffening wounds — not serious, but enough to lower his speed quite a little.

The start was much like those of previous runs—the Warhorse steaming away low and lightly, his ears up, and the breeze whistling through his thirteen stars.

Minkie, with Fango, the new dog, bounded away in eager pursuit, but, to the surprise of all, the gap grew smaller. The Warhorse was losing ground, and right before the grand-stand old Minkie turned him, and a cheer went up from the dog-men, for all knew the runners. Within fifty yards Fango scored a turn, and the race was right back to the start. There stood Slyman and Mickey. The rabbit dodged, the greyhounds plunged; Jack could not get away, and just as the final snap seemed near, the Warhorse leaped straight for Mickey, and in an instant was hidden in his arms, while the starter's feet flew out in energetic kicks to repel the furious dogs. It is not likely that the jack knew Mickey for a friend; he only yielded to the old instinct to fly from a certain enemy to a neutral or a possible friend, and, as luck would have it, he had wisely leaped and well. A cheer went up from the benches as Mickey hurried back with his favourite. But the dog-men

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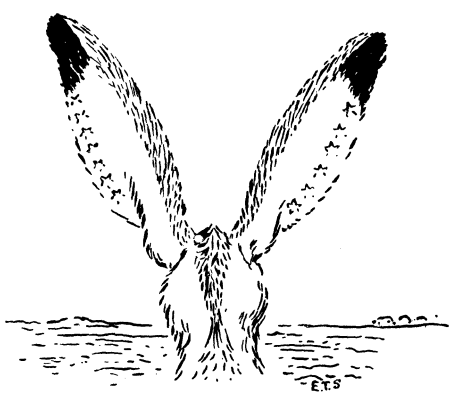
protested. "It wasn't a fair run; we want it finished." They appealed to the steward. He had backed the jack against Fango. He was sore now, and ordered a new race.

* * * * *

An hour's rest was the best Mickey could get for him, and he went as before, Fango and Perez behind him. He seemed less stiff now; he ran more like himself, but a little past the stand he was turned by Fango, and again by Perez, and back and across and here and there, leaping frantically, but failing to catch him. For several minutes it lasted. Mickey could see that Jack's ears were sinking. The new dog leaped; Jack dodged almost under him to avoid him, and back to meet the second; and now both ears were flat on his back. But the



"Star-spangled ears."

hounds were suffering, too. Their tongues were lolling out, their jaws and heaving sides were splashed with foam. The Warhorse's ears went up again. His courage seemed to revive in their distress. He made a straight dash for the haven; but the straight dash was just what the hounds could do, and within a hundred yards he was turned again, to begin another desperate game of zigzag. Then the dog-men saw danger for their dogs, and two new ones were slipped—two fresh hounds—surely they could end the race. But they did not. The first two were vanquished—gasping—out of it, but the next two racing near, the Warhorse put forth all his strength. He left the first two far behind—was nearly to the haven when the second two came up.

Nothing now but dodging could save him. His ears were sinking now; his heart was pattering on his ribs, but his spirit was strong. He flung himself in wildest zigzags. The hounds tumbled over each other. Again and again they thought they had him. One of them snapped off the end of his long, black tail, yet he escaped; but he could not get to the haven. The luck was against him. He was forced nearer to the grandstand. A thousand ladies were watching. The time limit was up. The second dogs were suffering now, when Mickey came running, yelling like a madman—words—imprecations—crazy sounds—

"Ye blackguard hoodlums! Ye dhirty, cowardly bastes!" and rushed furiously at the dogs, intent to do them bodily harm.

Officers came running and shouting, and Mickey, shrieking hatred and defiance, was dragged from the field, reviling dogs and men with every horrid, insulting name he could think of or invent.

"Fair play! whayer's yer fair play? ye liars! ye dhirty cheats! ye cowards!" and they drove him from the arena. The last he saw of it was the four foaming dogs feebly dodging after a weak and worn-out jack-rabbit, and the judge on his horse beckoning to the man with the gun.

The gate closed behind him, and Mickey heard a "*bang—bang!*" an unusual uproar mixed with yelps of dogs, and knew that little Jack Warhorse had been served with finish number four.

* * * * *

All his life he had loved dogs, but his sense of fair play was outraged. He could not get in nor see in, where he was. He raced along the lane to the haven, where he could get a good view, and arrived in time to see—Little Jack Warhorse with his half-masted ears limp into the haven, and realised at once that the man with the gun had missed, had hit the wrong runner, for there was the crowd at the stand watching two men who were carrying a wounded greyhound, while a veterinary surgeon was ministering to another panting on the ground.

Mickey looked about, seized a little shipping-box, put it at the angle of the haven, carefully drove the tired thing into it, closed the lid; then, with the box under his arm, he scaled the fence unseen and was gone.

It didn't matter; he had lost his job anyway. He tramped away from the city. He took the train at the nearest station and travelled some hours, and now he was in rabbit country again. The sun had long gone down; the night with its stars was

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over the plain when, among the farms, the Osage and alfalfa, Mickey Doo opened the box and gently put the Warhorse out.

Grinning as he did so, he said: "Shure an' it's ould Oireland that's proud to set the thirteen stars at liberty wance more!"

For a moment the little Warhorse gazed in doubt, then took three or four long leaps and a sky-hop to get his bearings. Now, spreading his national colours and his honour-marked ears, he bounded into his hard-won freedom, strong as ever, and melted into the night of his native plain.

He has been seen many times in Kaskado, and there have been many rabbit-drives in that region, but he seems to know some means of baffling them now, for in all the thousands that have been trapped and corralled, they never have since seen the star-spangled ears of Little Jack Warhorse.

A SONG . . FOR SUMMER.

By RALPH E GIBBS.

THE meadow-lark ripples out o'er the fresh stubble
A bugle-note merry to herald the Sun,—
Come wander, O, wander! A truce to all trouble.
Sing Hey, nonny nonny,—the Summer's begun!

Sing Hey, nonny nonny! The scent of the haying,—
The dew of the morning,—the sweet of the year.
The hearts of us now are too blithe for the saying
Of aught but "Hey-ei-o! The Summer is here."

A-perch on the fence-post the squirrel sits sentry;
The rabbit runs skipping;—the creek sparkles by;
Small folk of the hill,—the shy woodland gentry,—
Sing, each in his way, "O, the Summer and I!"

Sing Hey, for the dawning. The meadow a-quiver
With dew-brushed green where the quail trooped past;
The haze on the mountain,—the glint on the river,—
Sing Hey-o, the Summer!—it's Summer at last!

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AYESHA

THE RETURN OF "SHE."

By H. RIDER HAGGARD.*

SYNOPSIS OF FOREGOING CHAPTERS.—The return of "She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed" is recorded by Ludwig Horace Holly, the friend of that Leo Vincey whom Ayesha the beautiful loved in the awful tombs of Kôr. When the record begins, the two men are living in an old house remote upon the seashore of Cumberland, where they have been slowly recovering from the horror of the passing of Ayesha in the flames—a doom that seemed one of complete extinction, yet was charged with the strange last words: "I die not. I shall come again and shall once more be beautiful. I swear it—it is true." On a sullen August night, Leo is thrilled by a vision of Ayesha in all her former loveliness. She beckons him, and in a vision his spirit follows her into a realm of snowy peaks far beyond the furthest borders of Thibet. A sign in the clouds at dawn is repeated from this vision to both Leo and Holly, and together they start for Central Asia. Sixteen years of toil, struggle, and strange adventure pass, and they are still searching for "a mountain peak shaped like the Symbol of Life." After many wanderings they find themselves in a country where no European has ever set foot, on one of the spurs of the vast Cherga mountains, far eastward from Turkestan. Sheltered awhile in a Buddhist monastery, they hear of the recent visit of a stranger who has told the Lamas that his countryfolk, "dwelling beyond the Far Mountains," worship a priestess called Hes, or the Hesea, and upon persuasion the abbot of the monastery tells them that in a former incarnation he himself has seen the great priestess, who was "all loveliness." A perilous ascent into the unexplored mountain fastness leads them to the revelation of "the *crux ansata*, the Symbol of Life itself." Rescued from drowning by a beautiful woman and an aged man, they are conducted through "The Gate" into the kingdom and city of Kaloon. Their saviours, they learn, are the Khania or Queen of Kaloon, and a venerable physician of magical powers. Is this woman Ayesha? No; they conjecture her rather to be Amenartas, who wrote the "sherd" of the former chronicle. She falls in love with Leo, and he and Holly learn that her husband, the Khan, is a madman. Simbri, the magician, and Atene, the Khania, have already received a solemn charge from the Hesea of the "College" in the Mountain of Fire to receive two strangers and bring them safely to the Mountain. But Atene's love for Leo makes her detain the travellers awhile in Kaloon, and she even proposes that the Khan shall be murdered so that she can wed Leo. To this the Englishman replies: "I go to ask a certain question of the Oracle on yonder mountain peak. With your will or without it, I tell you that I go, and afterwards you can settle which is the stronger—the Khania of Kaloon or the Hesea of the House of Fire." The Khan himself assists the escape of the travellers for their further journey, but his jealousy has been aroused, and after they have set out on their journey to the fire-crowned Mountain he pursues them with his death-hounds. After a long chase, a few of the brutes, and the Khan, overtake them, and a terrible struggle ensues, in which Leo and Holly eventually prove the victors, and the Khan is slain. Not long afterwards the Khania and Simbri overtake them and seek to persuade them to return, but they refuse. The Khania leaves them, saying: "We do not part thus easily. You have summoned me to the Mountain, and even to the Mountain I will follow you. Aye, and there I will meet its spirit. . . . I will match my strength and magic against hers, as it is decreed that I shall do." Preserved by priestly intervention from death at the hands of a strange people, they realise that they are nearing the sphere of influence of the mysterious Hesea. And on the Mountain itself, conducted by the veiled form of a strange woman, they meet again with Atene, who brings thither her dead husband to the burying-place of the rulers of Kaloon. From a priest, Oros, who goes with them, they learn that for thousands of years this Mountain has been the home of a peculiar fire-worship, of which the head hierophant is a woman. To the veiled figure of Hes, on her throne, the two Englishmen tell of their wandering search; but before they can learn whether she is really the Ayesha of their former knowledge, they are witnesses of the solemn judgment of the dead Khan and the consignment of his corpse to "the Fiery Gulf."

CHAPTER XV.

THE SECOND ORDEAL.

(Continued.)

THE Hesea sat brooding on her rocky throne. She also knew that the hour had come. Presently she sighed, then motioned with her sceptre and spoke a word or two, dismissing the priests and priestesses, who departed and were seen no more. Two of them remained, however—Oros and the head priestess, who was called Papave, a young woman of a noble countenance.

"Listen, my servants," she said. "Great things are about to happen, which have to do with the coming of yonder strangers, for whom I have waited these many years, as is well known to you. Nor can I tell the issue, since to me, to whom power is given so freely, foresight of the future is denied. It well may happen, therefore, that this seat will soon be empty and this frame but food for the eternal fires. Nay, grieve not, grieve not, for I do not die; and if so, the spirit shall return again.

"Hearken, Papave. Thou art of the blood, and to thee alone have I opened all the doors of wisdom. If I pass now or at any time, take thou the ancient power, fill thou my place, and in all things do as I have instructed thee, that from this Mountain light may shine upon the world. Further, I command thee, and thee also, Oros my priest, that if I be summoned hence, you

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entertain these strangers hospitably, until it is possible to escort them from the land, whether by the road they came or across the northern hills and deserts. Should the Khania Atene attempt to detain them against their will, then raise the Tribes upon her in the name of the Hesea; depose her from her seat, conquer her land and hold it. Hear and obey."

"Mother, we hear and we will obey," answered Oros and Papave as with a single voice.

She waved her hand to show that this matter was finished; then after long thought spoke again, addressing herself to the Khania.

"Atene, last night thou didst ask me a question—why thou dost love this man," and she pointed to Leo. "To that the answer would be easy, for is he not one who might well stir passion in the breast of a woman such as thou art? But thou didst say also that thine own heart and the wisdom of yonder magician, thy uncle, told thee that since thy soul first sprang to life thou hadst loved him, and didst adjure me, by the Power to whom I must give my account, to draw the curtain from the past and let the truth be known.

"Woman, the hour has come, and I obey thy summons—not because thou dost command, but because it is my will. Of the beginning I can tell thee nothing, who am still human and no goddess. I know not why we three are wrapped in this coil of fate; I know not the destinies to which we journey up the ladder of a thousand lives, with grief and pain climbing the endless stair of circumstance; or, if I know, I may not say. Therefore I take up the tale where my own memory gives me light."

The Hesea paused, and we saw her frame shake as though beneath some fearful inward effort of the will. "Look now behind you!" she cried, throwing her arms wide.

We turned, and at first saw nothing save the great curtain of fire that rose from the abyss of the volcano, whereof, as I have told, the crest was bent over by the wind like the crest of a breaking billow. But presently, as we watched, in the depths of this red veil, Nature's awful lamp-flame, a picture began to form as it forms in the seer's magic crystal.

Behold! a temple set amid sands and washed by a wide palm-bordered river, and across its pyloned court processions of priests, who pass to and fro with flaunting banners. The court empties; I could see the shadow of a falcon's wings that fled across its sunlit floor. A man clad in a priest's white robe, shaven-headed, and barefooted, enters through the southern pylon gate and walks slowly towards a painted granite shrine, in which sits the image of a woman crowned with the double crown of Egypt, surmounted by a lotus bloom, and holding in her hand the sacred sistrum. Now, as though he heard some sound, he halts and looks towards us, and by the heaven above me, his face is the face of Leo Vincey in his youth, the face, too, of that Kallikrates whose corpse we had seen in the Caves of Kôr!

"Look, look!" gasped Leo, catching me by the arm; but I only nodded my head in answer.

The man walks on again, and kneeling before the goddess in the shrine, embraces her feet and makes his prayer to her. Now the gates roll open, and a procession enters, headed by a veiled, noble-looking woman, who bears offerings which she sets on the table before the shrine, bending her knee to the effigy of the goddess. Her oblations made, she turns to depart, and as she goes brushes her hand against the hand of the watching priest, who hesitates, then follows her.

When all her company have passed the gate, she lingers alone in the shadow of the pylon, whispering to the priest and pointing to the river and the southern land beyond. He is disturbed; he reasons with her, till after one swift glance round, she lets drop her veil, bending towards him and—their lips meet

As she flies, her face is turned towards us, and lo! it is the very face of Atene, and amid her dusky hair the uræus rears itself in jewelled gold, the symbol of her royal rank. She looks at the shaven priest; she laughs as though in triumph; she points to the western sun and to the river, and is gone.

Aye, and that laugh of long ago is echoed by Atene at our side, for she also laughs in triumph and cries aloud to the old Shaman—

"True diviners were my heart and thou! Behold how I won him in the past!"

Then like ice on fire fell the cold voice of the Hesea.

"Be silent, woman, and see how thou didst lose him in the past."

Lo! the scene changes, and on a couch a lovely shape lies sleeping. She dreams; she is afraid; and over her bends and whispers in her ear a shadowy form clad with the emblems of the goddess in the shrine, but now wearing upon her head the vulture cap. The woman wakes from her dream and looks

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"Alone in the shadow of the pylon."

round, and oh ! the face is the face of Ayesha as it was seen of us when first she loosed her veil in the Caves of Kôr.

A sigh went up from us ; we could not speak who thus fearfully once more beheld her loveliness.

Again she sleeps, again the awful form bends over her and whispers. It points, the distance opens. Lo ! on a stormy sea a boat, and in the boat two wrapped in each other's arms, the priest and the royal woman, while over them like a Vengeance, raw-necked and ragged-pinioned, hovers a following vulture, such a vulture as the goddess wore for head-dress.

That picture fades from its burning frame, leaving the vast sheet of fire empty as the noonday sky. Then another forms. First a great, smooth-walled cave carpeted with sand, a cave that we remembered well. Then, lying on the sand, now no longer shaven, but golden-haired, the corpse of the priest staring upwards with his glazed eyes, his white skin streaked with blood, and standing over him two women. One holds a javelin in her hand and is naked except for her flowing hair, and beautiful, beautiful beyond imagining. The other, wrapped in a dark cloak, beats the air with her hands, casting up her eyes as though to call the curse of Heaven upon her rival's head. And those women were she into whose sleeping ear the shadow had whispered, and the royal Egyptian who had kissed her lover beneath the pylon gate.

Slowly all the figures faded ; it was as though the fire ate them up, for first they became thin and white as ashes, then vanished. The Hesea, who had been leaning forward, sank backwards in her chair, as if weary with the toil of her own magic.

For a while confused pictures flitted rapidly to and fro across the vast mirror of the flame, such as might be reflected from an intelligence crowded with the memories of over two thousand years which it was too exhausted to separate and define.

Wild scenes, multitudes of people, great caves, and in them faces, amongst others our own, starting up distorted and enormous, to grow tiny in an instant and depart ; stark imaginations of Forms towering and divine ; of Things monstrous and inhuman ; armies marching, illimitable battlefields, and corpses rolled in blood, and hovering over them the spirits of the slain.

These pictures died as the others had died, and the fire was blank again.

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Then the Hesea spoke in a voice very faint at first, that by slow degrees grew stronger.

"Is thy question answered, O Atene ?"

"I have seen strange sights, Mother, mighty limnings worthy of thy magic, but how know I that they are more than vapours of thine own brain cast upon yonder fire to deceive and mock us ?"*

"Listen, then," said the Hesea in her weary voice, "to the interpretation of the writing, and cease to trouble me with thy doubts. Many an age ago, but shortly after I began to live this last, long life of mine, Isis, the great goddess of Egypt, had her Holy House at Behbit, near the Nile. It is a ruin now, and Isis has departed from Egypt, though still under the Power that fashioned it and her : she rules the world, for she is Nature's self. Of that shrine a certain man, a Greek, Kallikrates by name, was chief priest, chosen for her service by the favour of the goddess, vowed to her eternally and to her alone, by the dreadful oath that might not be broken without punishment as eternal.

"In the flame thou sawest that priest, and here at thy side he stands, re-born to fulfil his destiny and ours.

"There lived also a daughter of Pharaoh's house, one Amenartas, who cast eyes of love upon this Kallikrates, and, wrapping him in her spells—for then as now she practised witcheries—caused him to break his oaths and fly with her, as thou sawest written in the flame. Thou, Atene, was that Amenartas.

"Lastly, there lived a certain Arabian, named Ayesha, a wise and lovely woman, who, in the emptiness of her heart and the sorrow of much knowledge, had sought refuge in the service of the universal Mother, thinking there to win the true wisdom which ever fled from her. That Ayesha, as thou sawest also, the goddess visited in a dream, bidding her to follow those faithless ones, and work Heaven's vengeance on them, and promising her in reward victory over death upon the earth, and beauty such as had not been known in woman.

"She followed far ; she awaited them where they wandered. Guided by a sage named Noot, one who from the beginning had been appointed to her service, and that of another —thou, O Holly, wast that man—she found

* Considered in the light of subsequent revelations, vouchsafed to us by Ayesha herself, I am inclined to believe that Atene's shrewd surmise was accurate, and that these fearful pictures, although founded on events that had happened in the past, were in the main "vapours" cast upon the crater fire—visions raised in our minds to "deceive and mock us."—L. H. H.

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the essence in which to bathe is to outlive Generations, Faiths, and Empires, saying—

"'I will slay these guilty ones. I will slay them presently, as I am commanded.'

"Yet Ayesha slew not, for now their sin was her sin, since she, who had never loved, came to desire this man. She led them to the Place of Life, purposing there to clothe him and herself with immortality, and let the woman die. But it was not so fated, for then the goddess smote. The life was Ayesha's, as had been promised, but in its first hour, blinded with jealous rage because he shrank from her unveiled glory to the mortal woman at his side, this Ayesha brought him to his death, and alas! alas! left herself undying.

"Thus did the angry goddess work woe upon her faithless ministers, giving to the priest swift doom, to the priestess Ayesha long remorse and misery, and to the royal Amenartas jealousy more bitter than life or death, and the fate of unending effort to win back that love which, defying Heaven, she had dared to steal, but to be bereft thereof again.

* * * * *

"Lo! now the ages pass, and at the time appointed, to that undying Ayesha who, whilst awaiting his re-birth, from century to century mourned his loss, and did bitter penance for her sins, came back the man, her heart's desire. Then, whilst all went well for her and him, again the goddess smote and robbed her of her reward. Before her lover's living eyes, sunk in utter shame and misery, the beautiful became hideous, the undying seemed to die.

"Yet, O Kallikrates, I tell thee that she died not. Did not Ayesha swear to thee yonder in the Caves of Kôr that she would come again? for even in that awful hour this comfort kissed her soul. Thereafter, Leo Vincey, who art Kallikrates, did not her spirit lead thee in thy sleep and stand with thee upon this very pinnacle which should be thy beacon light to guide thee back to her? And didst thou not search these many years, not knowing that she companioned thy every step and strove to guard thee in every danger till at length in the permitted hour thou camest back to her?"

She paused, and looked towards Leo, as though awaiting his reply.

"Of the first part of the tale, except from the writing on the sherd, I know nothing, Lady," he said; "of the rest, I—or, rather, we—know that it is true. Yet I would ask a question, and I pray thee of thy charity let thy answer be swift and short. Thou sayest that in the permitted hour I came back to Ayesha? Where, then, is Ayesha? Art thou Ayesha? And if so, why is thy voice changed? Why art thou less in stature? Oh! in the name of whatever god thou dost worship, tell me art thou Ayesha?"

"*I am Ayesha*," she answered solemnly, "that very Ayesha to whom thou didst pledge thyself eternally."

"She lies, she lies!" broke in Atene. "I tell thee, husband—for such with her own lips she declares thou art to me—that yonder woman who says that she parted from thee young and beautiful, less than twenty years ago, is none other than the aged priestess who, for a century, at least, has borne rule in these halls of Hes. Let her deny it if she can."

"Oros," said the Mother, "tell thou the tale of the death of that priestess of whom the Khania speaks."

The priest bowed, and in his usual, calm voice, as though he were narrating some event of every day, said mechanically, in a fashion that carried no conviction to my mind—

"Eighteen years ago, on the fourth night of the first month of winter in the year 2333 of the founding of the worship of Hes on this Mountain, the priestess of whom the Khania Atene speaks died of old age in my presence, in the hundred and eighth year of her rule. Three hours later, we went to lift her from the throne on which she died, to prepare her corpse for burial in this fire, according to the ancient custom. Lo! a miracle, for she lived again, the same, yet very changed.

"Thinking this a work of evil magic, the Priests and Priestesses of the College rejected her and would have driven her from the throne. Thereon the Mountain blazed and thundered, the light from the fiery pillars died, and great terror fell upon the souls of men. Then from the deep darkness above the altar where stands the statue of the Mother of Men, the voice of the living goddess spoke, saying—

"'Accept ye her whom I have set to rule over you, that my judgments and my purposes may be fulfilled.'

"The voice ceased, the fiery torches burnt again, and we bowed the knee to the new Hesea, and named her Mother in the ears of all. That is the tale to which hundreds can bear witness."

"Thou hearest, Atene," said the Hesea. "Dost thou still doubt?"

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"Leo knelt down and kissed her on the brow."

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"Aye," answered the Khania, "for I hold that Oros also lies; or if he lies not, then he dreams, or perchance that voice he heard was thine own. Now, if thou art this undying woman, this Ayesha, let proof be made of it to these two men who knew thee in the past. Tear away those wrappings that guard thy loveliness thus jealously. Let thy shape divine, thy beauty incomparable, shine out upon our dazzled sight. Surely thy lover will not forget such charms; surely he will know thee, and bow the knee, saying: 'This is my Immortal, and no other woman.'

"Then, and not till then, will I believe that thou art even what thou declarest thyself to be, an evil spirit, who bought undying life with murder, and used thy demon loveliness to bewitch the souls of men."

Now the Hesea on the throne seemed to be much troubled, for she rocked herself to and fro, and wrung her white-draped hands.

"Kallikrates," she said in a voice that sounded like a moan, "is this thy will? For if it be, know that I must obey. Yet I pray thee command it not, for the time is not yet come; the promise unbreakable is not yet fulfilled. *I am somewhat changed*, Kallikrates, since I kissed thee on the brow and named thee mine, yonder in the Caves of Kôr."

Leo looked about him desperately, till his eyes fell upon the mocking face of Atene, who cried—

"Bid her unveil, my lord. I swear to thee I'll not be jealous."

At that taunt he took fire.

"Aye," he said, "I bid her unveil, that I may learn the best or worst, who otherwise must die of this suspense. Howsoever changed, if she be Ayesha, I shall know her; and if she be Ayesha, I shall love her."

"Bold words, Kallikrates," answered the Hesea; "yet from my very heart I thank thee for them: those sweet words of trust and faithfulness to thou knowest not what. Learn now the truth, for I may keep naught back from thee. When I unveil, it is decreed that thou must make thy choice for the last time on this earth between yonder woman, my rival from the beginning, and that Ayesha to whom thou art sworn. Thou canst reject me if thou wilt, and no ill shall come to thee, but many a blessing, as men reckon them—power and wealth and love. Only then thou must tear my memory from thy heart, for then I leave thee to follow thy fate alone, till at the last the purpose of these deeds and sufferings is made clear.

"Be warned. No light ordeal lies before thee. Be warned. I can promise thee naught save such love as woman never gave to man, love that perchance—I know not—must yet remain unsatisfied upon the earth."

Then she turned to me and said: "Oh! thou, Holly, thou true friend, thou guardian from of old, thou, next to him most beloved by me, to thy clear and innocent spirit perchance wisdom may be given that is denied to us, the little children whom thine arms protect. Counsel thou him, my Holly, with the counsel that is given thee, and I will obey thy words and his, and, whatever befalls, will bless thee from my soul. Aye, and should he cast me off, then in the Land beyond the lands, in the Star appointed, where all earthly passions fade, together will we dwell eternally in a friendship glorious, thou and I alone.

"For *thou* wilt not reject; thy steel, forged in the furnace of pure truth and power, shall not lose its temper in these small fires of temptation, and become a rusted chain to bind thee to another woman's breast—until it canker to her heart and thine."

"Ayesha, I thank thee for thy words," I answered simply, "and by them and that promise of thine, I, thy poor friend—for more I never thought to be—am a thousandfold repaid for many sufferings. This I will add—that for my part I know that thou art She whom we have lost, since, whate'er the lips that speak them, those thoughts and words are Ayesha's, and hers alone."

Thus I spoke, not knowing what else to say, for I was filled with a great joy, a calm and ineffable satisfaction, which broke thus feebly from my heart. For now I knew that I was dear to Ayesha as I had always been dear to Leo; the closest of friends, from whom she never would be parted. What more could I desire?

* * * * *

We fell back; we spoke together, whilst they watched us silently. What we said I do not quite remember, but the end of it was that, as the Hesea had done, Leo bade me judge and choose. Then into my mind there came a clear command, from my own conscience or otherwhere, who can say? This was the command, that I should bid her to unveil, and let Fate declare its purposes.

"Decide," said Leo. "I cannot bear much more. Like that woman, whoever she may be, whatever happens, I will not blame you, Horace."

"Good," I answered. "I have decided"; and stepping forward, I said: "We have

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taken counsel, Hes, and it is our will, who would learn the truth and be at rest, that thou shouldst unveil before us, here and now."

"I hear and obey," the Priestess answered in a voice like to that of a dying woman; "only, I beseech you both, be pitiful to me, spare me your mockeries; add not the coals of your hate and scorn to the fires of a soul in hell, for whate'er I am, I became it for thy sake, Kallikrates. Yet, yet I also am athirst for knowledge; for though I know all wisdom, although I wield much power, one thing remains to me to learn—what is the worth of the love of man, and if, indeed, it can live beyond the horrors of the grave?"

Then, rising slowly, the Hesea walked—or, rather, tottered—to the unroofed open space in front of the rock chamber, and stood there quite near to the brink of the flaming gulf beneath.

"Come hither, Papave, and loose these veils," she cried in a shrill, thin voice.

Papave advanced, and with a look of awe upon her handsome face began the task. She was not a tall woman, yet as she bent over her I noted that she seemed to tower above her mistress, the Hesea.

The outer veils fell, revealing more within. These fell also, and now before us stood the mummylike shape, although it seemed to be of less stature, of that strange being who had met us in the Place of Bones. So it would seem that our mysterious guide and the high priestess Hes were the same.

Look! Length by length the wrappings sank from her. Would they never end? How small grew the frame within? She was very short now, unnaturally short for a full-grown woman, and oh! I grew sick at heart. The last bandages uncoiled themselves like shavings from a stick; two wrinkled hands appeared, if hands they could be called. Then the feet—once I had seen such on the mummy of a princess of Egypt, and even now, by some fantastic play of the mind, I remembered that on her coffin this princess was named "The Beautiful."

Everything was gone now, except a shift and a last inner veil about the head. Hes waved back the priestess Papave, who fell half fainting to the ground and lay there covering her eyes with her hand. Then uttering something like a scream, she gripped this veil in her thin talons, tore it away, and with a gesture of uttermost despair, turned and faced us.

Oh! she was—nay, I will not describe her. I knew her at once, for thus had I seen her last before the Fire of Life, and, strangely enough, through the mask of unutterable age, through that cloak of humanity's last decay, still shone some resemblance to the glorious and superhuman Ayesha: the shape of the face, the air of defiant pride that for an instant bore her up—I know not what.

Yes, there she stood, and the fierce light of the heartless fires beat upon her, revealing every shame.

* * * * *

There was a dreadful silence. I saw Leo's lips turn white and his knees begin to give; but by some effort he recovered himself, and stayed still and upright like a dead man held by a wire. Also I saw Atene—and this is to her credit—turn her head away. She had desired to see her rival humiliated, but that horrible sight shocked her; some sense of their common womanhood for the moment touched her pity. Only Simbri—who, I think, knew what to expect—and Oros remained quite unmoved; indeed, in that ghastly silence the latter spoke, and ever afterwards I loved him for his words.

"What of the vile vessel, rotted in the grave of time? What of the flesh that perishes?" he said. "Look through the ruined lamp to the eternal light which burns within. Look through its covering carrion to the inextinguishable soul."

My heart applauded these noble sentiments. I was of one mind with Oros; but oh, Heaven! I felt that my brain was going, and I wished that it would go, so that I might hear and see no more.

That look which gathered on Ayesha's mummy face! At first there had been a little hope, but the hope died, and anguish, anguish, *anguish* took its place.

Something must be done—this could not endure. My lips clave together, no word would come; my feet refused to move.

I began to contemplate the scenery. How wonderful were that sheet of flame and the ripples which ran up and down its height! How awsome its billowy crest! It would be warm lying in yonder red gulf below with the dead Rassen, but, oh! I wished that I shared his bed and had finished with these agonies.

Thank Heaven! Atene was speaking. She had stepped to the side of the naked-headed Thing, and stood by it in all the pride of her rich beauty and perfect womanhood.

"Leo Vincey, or Kallikrates," said Atene—"take which name thou wilt—thou thinkest ill of me, perhaps, but know that at least I scorn to mock a rival in her mortal shame.

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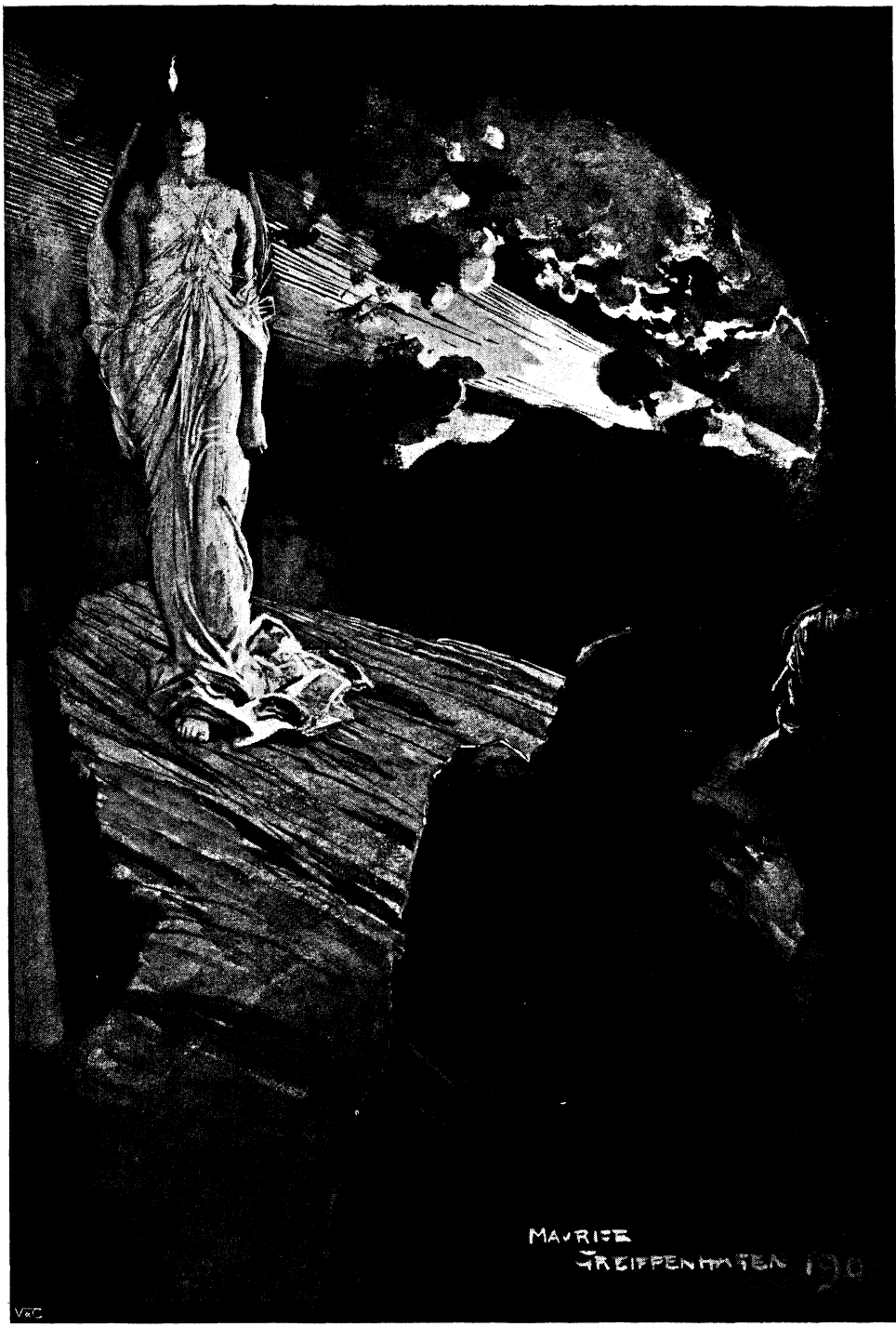

"From the east a single ray of upward-springing light."

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She told us a wild tale, but now, a tale true or false, but more false than true, I think, of how I robbed a goddess of a votary, and of how that goddess—Ayesha's self, perchance—was avenged upon me for the crime of yielding to the man I loved. Well, let goddesses—if such indeed there be—take their way and work their will upon the helpless, and I, a mortal, will take mine until the clutch of doom closes round my throat and chokes out life and memory, and I, too, am a goddess—or a clod.

"Meanwhile, thou man, I shame not to say it before all these witnesses, I love thee, and it seems that this—this woman or goddess—loves thee also, and she has told us that now, *now* thou must choose between us once and for ever. She has told us, too, that if I sinned against Isis—whose minister, be it remembered, she declares herself—herself she sinned yet more. For she would have taken thee both from a heavenly mistress and from an earthly bride, and yet snatch that guerdon of immortality which is hers to-day. Therefore, if I am evil, she is worse, nor does the flame that burns within the casket whereof Oros spoke shine so very pure and bright.

"Choose thou, then, Leo Vincey, and let there be an end. I vaunt not myself; thou knowest what I have been and seest what I am. Yet I can give thee love and happiness and, mayhap, children to follow after thee, and with them some place and power. What yonder witch can give thee thou canst guess. Tales of the past, pictures on the flame, wise maxims and honeyed words, and after thou art dead once more, promises, perhaps, of joy to come when that terrible goddess whom she serves so closely shall be appeased. I have spoken. Yet I will add a word:

"O thou for whom, if the Hesea's tale be true, I did once lay down my royal rank and dare the dangers of an unsailed sea; O thou whom in ages gone I would have sheltered with my frail body from the sorceries of this cold, self-seeking witch; O thou whom but a little while ago at my own life's risk I drew from death in yonder river, choose, choose!"

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To all this speech, so moderate yet so cruel, so well-reasoned and yet so false, because of its glosses and omissions, the huddled Ayesha seemed to listen with a fierce intentness. Yet she made no answer, not a single word, not a sign even; she who had said her say and scorned to plead her part.

I looked at Leo's ashen face. He leaned towards Atene, drawn perhaps by the passion shining in her beauteous eyes, then of a sudden straightened himself, shook his head, and sighed. The colour flamed to his brow, and his eyes grew almost happy.

"After all," he said, thinking aloud rather than speaking, "I have to do not with unknowable pasts or with mystic futures, but with the things of my own life. Ayesha waited for me through two thousand years; Atene could marry a man she hated for power's sake, and then could poison him, as perhaps she would poison me when I wearied her. I know not what oaths I swore to Amenartas, if such a woman lived. I remember the oaths I swore to Ayesha. If I shrink from her now, why, then my life is a lie and my belief a fraud; then love will not endure the touch of age and never can survive the grave.

"Nay, remembering what Ayesha was, I take her as she is, in faith and hope of what she shall be. At least love is immortal; and if it must, why, let it feed on memory alone till death sets free the soul."

Then stepping to where stood the dreadful, shrivelled form, Leo knelt down and kissed her on the brow.

Yes, he kissed the trembling horror of that wrinkled head, and I think it was one of the greatest, bravest acts ever done by man.

"Thou hast chosen," said Atene in a cold voice, "and I tell thee, Leo Vincey, that the manner of thy choice makes me mourn my loss the more. Take now thy—thy bride and let me hence."

But Ayesha still said no word and made no sign, till presently she sank upon her bony knees and began to pray aloud. These were the words of her prayer, as I heard them, though the exact Power to which it was addressed is not very easy to determine, as I never discovered who or what it was that she worshipped in her heart—

* * * * *

"O Thou Minister of the Almighty Will, Thou sharp Sword in the hand of Doom, Thou inevitable Law that art named Nature; Thou who wast crowned as Isis of the Egyptians, but art the goddess of all climes and ages; Thou that leadest the man to the maid, and layest the infant on its mother's breast, that bringest our dust to its kindred dust, that givest life to death, and into the dark of death breathest the light of life again; Thou who causest the abundant earth to bear, whose smile is Spring, whose laugh is the ripple of the sea, whose noontide rest is drowsy Summer, and whose sleep is Winter's

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night, hear Thou the supplication of thy chosen child and minister:

"Of old Thou gavest me Thine own strength with deathless days, and beauty above every daughter of this Star. But I sinned against Thee sore, and for my sin I paid in endless centuries of solitude, in the vileness that makes me loathsome to my lover's eyes, and for its diadem of perfect power sets upon my brow this crown of naked mockery. Yet in Thy breath, the swift essence that brought me light, that brought me gloom, Thou didst vow to me that I who cannot die should once more pluck the lost flower of my immortal loveliness from this foul slime of shame.

"Therefore, merciful Mother that bore me, to Thee I make my prayer. Oh, let his true love atone my sin; or, if it may not be, then give me death, the last and most blessed of Thy boons!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CHANGE.

SHE ceased, and there was a long, long silence. Leo and I looked at each other in dismay. We had hoped against hope that this beautiful and piteous prayer, addressed apparently to the great, dumb spirit of Nature, would be answered. That meant a miracle, but what of it? The prolongation of the life of Ayesha was a miracle, though it is true that some humble reptiles are said to live as long as she had done.

The transference of her spirit from the Caves of Kôr to this temple was a miracle—that is, to our Western minds, though the dwellers in these parts of Central Asia would not hold it so. That she should reappear with the same hideous body was a miracle. But was it the same body? Was it not the body of the last Hesea? One very ancient woman is much like another, and eighteen years of the working of the soul or identity within might well wear away their trivial differences and give to the borrowed form some resemblance to that which it had left.

At least the figures on that mirror of the flame were a miracle. Nay, why so? A hundred clairvoyants in a hundred cities can produce or see their like in water and in crystal, the difference being only one of size. They were but reflections of scenes familiar to the mind of Ayesha, or perhaps not so much as that. Perhaps they were only phantasms called up in *our* minds by her mesmeric force.

Nay, none of these things were true miracles, since all, however strange, might be capable of explanation. What right, then, had we to expect a marvel now?

Such thoughts as these rose in our minds as the endless minutes were born and died and—nothing happened.

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Yes, at last one thing did happen. The light from the sheet of flame died gradually away, as the flame itself sank downwards into the abysses of the pit. But about this in itself there was nothing wonderful, for, as we had seen with our own eyes from afar, this fire varied much, and, indeed, it was customary for it to die down at the approach of dawn, which now drew very near.

Still, that onward-creeping darkness added to the terrors of the scene. By the last rays of the lurid light we saw Ayesha rise and advance some few paces to that little tongue of rock at the edge of the pit off which the body of Rassen had been hurled; saw her standing on it also, looking like some black, misshapen imp against the smoky glow which still rose from the depths beneath.

Leo would have gone forward to her, for he believed that she was about to hurl herself to doom, which, indeed, I thought was her design. But the priest Oros and the priestess Papave, obeying, I suppose, some secret command that reached them I know not how, sprang to him and, seizing his arms, held him back. Then it became quite dark, and through the darkness we could hear Ayesha chanting a dirgelike hymn in some secret holy tongue which was unknown to us.

A great flake of fire floated through the gloom, rocking to and fro like some vast bird upon its pinions. We had seen many such that night, torn by the gale from the crest of the blazing curtain as I have described. But—but——

"Horace," whispered Leo through his chattering teeth, "that flame is coming up *against the wind!*"

"Perhaps the wind has changed," I answered, though I knew well that it had not, that it blew stronger than ever from the south.

Nearer and nearer sailed the rocking flame, two enormous wings was the shape of it, with something dark between them. It reached the little promontory. The wings appeared to fold themselves about the dwarfed figure that stood thereon—illuminating it for a moment. Then the light went

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out of them and they vanished—everything vanished.

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A while passed, it may have been a minute or an hour, when suddenly the priestess Papave, in obedience to some summons which we could not hear, crept by me. I knew that it was she, because her woman's garments touched me as she went. Another space of silence and of deep darkness, during which I heard Papave return, breathing in short, sobbing gasps like one who is very frightened.

Ah! I thought, she has cast herself into the pit! The tragedy is finished!

Then it was that the wondrous music came. Of course, it *may* only have been the sound of the priests chanting beyond us, but I do not think so, since its quality was quite different from any that I heard in the temple before or afterwards—to any, indeed, that ever I heard upon the earth.

I cannot describe it, but it was awful to listen to, yet most entrancing. From the black, smoke-veiled pit where the fire had burned, it welled and echoed—now a single, heavenly voice, now a sweet chorus, and now an air-shaking thunder as of a hundred organs played to time.

That diverse and majestic harmony seemed to include, to express every human emotion, and I have often thought since then that in its all-embracing scope and range, this, the song or pæan of her re-birth, was symbolical of the infinite variety of Ayesha's spirit. Yet, like that spirit, it had its master notes—power, passion, suffering, mystery, and loveliness. Also there could be no doubt as to the general significance of the chant, by whomsoever it was sung. It was the changeful story of a mighty soul; it was worship, worship, worship of a queen divine!

Like slow clouds of incense fading to the bannered roof of some high choir, the bursts of unearthly melodies grew faint; in the far distance of the hollow pit they wailed themselves away.

* * * * *

Look! from the east a single ray of upward-springing light.

"Behold the dawn!" said the quiet voice of Oros.

That ray pierced the heavens above our heads, a very sword of flame. It sank downwards, swiftly. Suddenly it fell—not upon us, for as yet the rocky walls of our chamber warded it away, but on to the little promontory at its edge.

Oh! and there—a Glory covered with a single garment—stood a shape celestial. It seemed to be asleep, since the eyes were shut. Or was it dead, for at first that face was a face of death? Look, the sunlight played upon her, shining through the thin veil, the dark eyes opened like the eyes of a wondering child; the blood of life flowed up the ivory bosom into the pallid cheeks; the raiment of black and curling tresses wavered in the wind; the head of the jewelled snake that held them sparkled beneath her breast.

Was it an illusion, or was this Ayesha as she had been when she entered the rolling flame in the caverns of Kôr? Our knees gave way beneath us, and down, our arms about each other's necks, Leo and I sank till we lay upon the ground. Then a voice, sweeter than honey, softer than the whisper of a twilight breeze among the reeds, spoke near to us, and these were the words it said—

"*Come hither to me, Kallikrates, that I may pay thee back that redeeming kiss of faith and love thou gavest me but now!*"

* * * * *

Leo struggled to his feet. Like a drunken man he staggered to where Ayesha stood; then overcome, sank before her on his knees.

"Arise!" she said. "It is I who should kneel to thee," and she stretched out her hand to raise him, whispering in his ear the while.

Still he would not, or could not rise; so very slowly she bent over him and touched him with her lips upon the brow. Next she beckoned to me. I came, and would have knelt also, but she suffered it not.

"Nay," she said, in her rich, remembered voice, "thou art no suitor; it shall not be. Of lovers and worshippers henceforth as before I can find a plenty if I will, or even if I will it not. But where shall I find another friend like to thee, O Holly, whom thus I greet?" and leaning towards me, with her lips she touched me also on the brow—just touched me, and no more.

Fragrant was Ayesha's breath as roses, the odour of roses clung to her lovely hair; her sweet body gleamed like some white sea-pearl; a faint but palpable radiance crowned her head; no sculptor ever fashioned such a marvel as the arm with which she held her veil about her; no stars in heaven ever shone more purely bright than did her calm, entranced eyes.

Yet it is true, even with her lips upon me, all I felt for her was a love divine into which no human passion entered. Once, I

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"She bent over him and touched him with her lips upon the brow."

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acknowledge to my shame, it was otherwise; but I am an old man now, and have done with such frailties. Moreover, had not Ayesha named me Guardian, Protector, Friend, and sworn to me that with her and Leo I should ever dwell where all earthly passions fail? I repeat: What more could I desire?

Taking Leo by the hand, Ayesha returned with him into the shelter of the rock-hewn chamber, and when she entered its shadows, shivered a little as though with cold. I rejoiced at this, I remember, for it seemed to show me that she still was human, divine as she might appear. Here her priest and priestess prostrated themselves before her, but she motioned to them to rise, laying a hand upon the head of each as though in blessing.

"I am a' cold," she said; "give me my mantle," and Papave threw the purple-broidered garment upon her shoulders, whence now it hung royally, like a coronation robe.

"Nay," she went on, "it is not this long-lost shape of mine, which in his kiss my lord gave back to me, that shivers in the icy wind; it is my spirit's self bared to the bitter breath of Destiny. O my love, my love, offended powers are not easily appeased, even when they appear to pardon; and though I shall no more be made a mockery in thy sight, how long is given us together upon the world I know not—but a little hour perchance. Well, ere we pass otherwhere, we will make it glorious, drinking as deeply of the cup of joy as we have drunk of those of sorrows and of shame. This place is hateful to me, for in it I have suffered more than ever woman did on earth or phantom in the deepest hell. It is hateful—it is ill-omened. I pray that never again may I behold it.

"Say, what is it passes in thy mind, magician?" and of a sudden she turned fiercely upon the Shaman Simbri, who stood near, his arms crossed upon his breast.

"Only, thou Beautiful," he answered, "a dim shadow of things to come. I have what thou dost lack, with all thy wisdom—the gift of foresight; and here I see a dead man lying——"

"Another word," she broke in, with fury born of some dark fear, "and thou shalt be that man! Fool! put me not in mind that now I have strength again to rid me of the ancient foes I hate, lest I should use a sword thou thrustest to my hand," and her eyes, that had been so calm and happy, blazed upon him like fire.

The old wizard felt their fearsome might, and shrank from it till the wall stayed him.

"Great One! now as ever I salute thee. Yes, now as at the first beginning whereof we know alone," he stammered. "I had no more to say; the face of that dead man was not revealed to me. I saw only that some crowned Khan of Kaloon to be shall lie here, as he whom the flame has taken lay an hour ago."

"Doubtless many a Khan of Kaloon will lie here," she answered coldly. "Fear not, Shaman, my wrath is past; yet be wise, mine enemy, and prophesy no more evil to the great. Come, let us hence."

So, still led by Leo, she passed from that chamber and stood presently upon the apex of the soaring pillar. The sun was up now, flooding the Mountain flanks, the plains of Kaloon far beneath, and the distant, misty peaks with a sheen of gold. Ayesha stood considering the mighty prospect, then addressing Leo, she said—

"The world is very fair; I give it all to thee."

Now Atene spoke for the first time.

"Dost thou mean, Hes—if thou art still the Hesea, and not a demon from the Pit—that thou offerest my territories to this man as a love-gift? If so, I tell thee that first thou must conquer them."

"Ungentle are thy words and mien," answered Ayesha, "yet I forgive them both, for I also can scorn to mock a rival in my hour of victory. When thou wast the fairer, thou didst proffer him these very lands; but say, who is the fairer now? Look at us, all of you, and judge," and she stood by Atene and smiled.

The Khania was a lovely woman. Never to my knowledge have I seen one lovelier, but oh! how coarse and poor she showed beside the wild, ethereal beauty of Ayesha born again! For that beauty was not altogether human—far less so, indeed, than it had been in the Caves of Kôr; now it was the beauty of a spirit.

The little light that always shone upon Ayesha's brow; the wide-set, maddening eyes which were filled sometimes with the fire of the stars and sometimes with the blue darkness of the heavens wherein they float; the curved lips, so wistful yet so proud; the tresses fine as glossy silk that still spread and rippled as though with a separate life; the general air, not so much of majesty as of some secret power hard to be restrained, that strove in that delicate body and proclaimed its presence to the most careless; that flame of the soul within whereof Oros had spoken, shining now through no "vile vessel,"

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"In a second the attempt had been made and failed."

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but in a vase of alabaster and of pearl—none of these things and qualities were altogether human. I felt it and was afraid, and Atene felt it also, for she answered—

"I am but a woman. What thou art, thou knowest best. Still, a taper cannot shine midst yonder fires, nor a glow-worm against a fallen star; nor can my mortal flesh compare with the glory thou hast earned from hell in payment for thy gifts and homage to the Lord of Ill. Yet as woman I am thy equal, and as spirit I shall be thy mistress, when, robbed of these borrowed beauties, thou, Ayesha, standest naked and ashamed before the Judge of all whom thou hast deserted and defied; yes, as thou stoodest but now upon yonder brink above the burning pit where thou yet shalt wander, wailing thy lost love. For this I know, mine enemy, that *man and spirit cannot mate*," and Atene ceased, choking in her bitter rage and jealousy.

Now, watching Ayesha, I saw her wince a little beneath these evil-omened words, saw also a tinge of grey touch the carmine of her lips, and her deep eyes grow dark and troubled. In an instant it had gone, and she was asking in a voice that rang clear as silver bells—

"Why ravest thou, Atene, like some short-lived summer torrent against the barrier of a seamless cliff? Dost think, poor creature of an hour, to sweep away the rock of my eternal strength with foam and bursting bubbles? Have done and listen. I do not seek thy petty rule, who, if I will it, can take the empire of the world. Yet learn, thou holdest it of my hand. More—I purpose soon to visit thee in thy city—choose thou if it shall be in peace or war!

"Therefore, Khania, purge thy Court and amend thy laws, that when I come I may find contentment in the land which now it lacks, and confirm thee in thy government. My counsel to thee also is that thou choose some worthy man to husband; let him be whom thou wilt, if only he is just and upright, and one upon whom thou mayest rest, needing wise guidance as thou dost, Atene.

"Come, now, my guests, let us hence." and she walked past the Khania, stepping fearlessly upon the very edge of the wind-swept, rounded peak.

* * * * *

In a second the attempt had been made and failed; so quickly, indeed, that it was not until Leo and I compared our impressions afterwards that we could be sure of what had happened. As Ayesha passed her, the maddened Khania drew a hidden dagger and struck with all her force at her rival's back. I saw the knife vanish to the hilt in her body, as I thought; but this cannot have been so, since it fell to the ground, and she who should have been dead took no hurt at all.

Feeling that she had failed, with a movement like the sudden lurch of a ship, Atene thrust at Ayesha, proposing to hurl her to destruction in the depths beneath. Lo! her outstretched arms went past her, although Ayesha never seemed to stir. Yes, it was Atene who would have fallen, Atene who already fell, had not Ayesha put out her hand and caught her by the wrist, bearing all her backward-swaying weight as easily as though she were but an infant, and without effort drawing her to safety.

"Foolish woman!" she said in pitying tones. "Wast thou so vexed that thou wouldst strip thyself of the pleasant shape which Heaven has given thee? Surely this is madness, Atene; for how knowest thou in what likeness thou mightest be sent to tread the earth again? As no queen, perhaps, but as a peasant's child, deformed, unsightly; for such reward, it is said, is given to those that achieve self-murder. Or even, as many think, shaped like a beast—a snake, a cat, a tigress! Why, see," and she picked up the dagger from the ground and cast it into the air, "that point was poisoned. Had it but pricked thee, now!" and she smiled at her and shook her head.

But Atene could bear no more of this mockery, more venomed than her own steel.

"Thou art not mortal!" she wailed. "How can I prevail against thee? To Heaven I leave thy punishment," and there upon the rocky peak Atene sank down and wept.

Leo stood nearest to her, and the sight of this royal woman in her misery proved too much for him to bear. Stepping to her side, he stooped and lifted her to her feet, muttering some kind words. For a moment she rested on his arm, then shook herself free of him and took the proffered hand of her old uncle Simbri.

"I see," said Ayesha, "that, as ever, thou art courteous, my lord Leo; but it is best that her own servant should take charge of her, for—she may hide more daggers. Come, the day grows, and surely we need rest."

(*To be continued.*)

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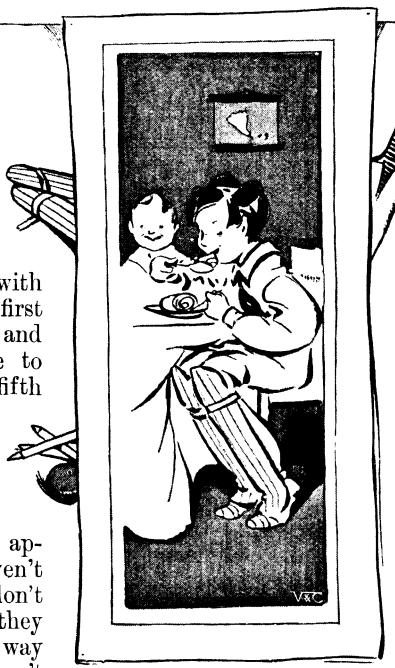
"Concerning Cricket"



"I have nothing to say against roly-polies."

By A BOY WHO PLAYS IT.

THE worst of cricket on a half-holiday is that it comes so soon after dinner. On ordinary days one has time to subside (I think that is putting it very nicely), but on half-holidays you start playing with your belt let out to the first hole, if it's a leather one, and you probably aren't able to draw it in to the fourth or fifth hole until after you've had your innings—which is apt to be disastrous. Of course, when I say this, I speak in a general way of boys who have good appetites. Those who haven't are poor creatures, and don't count; and, whatever they may think, it isn't in any way to their credit that they don't swell at inconvenient times. My own appetite might be described as normal (I found out the meaning of that word from the nurse who took my temperature when I had measles), so it is fair to regard my own sensations and opinions on the same as likely to be shared by others.

Our half-holidays are Wednesdays and Saturdays (which also I believe to be normal), and I wish to take this opportunity of saying that the dinners provided for us on these days are most injudiciously chosen. For instance, we nearly always have roly-poly on Wednesdays, and fruit tart on Saturdays—a practice which might almost be described as sinful.

I have nothing to say against roly-polies and fruit tarts in themselves. Far from it. But there's a great deal to be said against them in me on these occasions. Any fair-minded person can understand the difficulty—I might say the impossibility—of receiving those blessings with moderation; and it seems to me that there are enough unavoidable temptations in life without having them deliberately put in one's way.

Now, there is not the smallest temptation hidden in sago puddings or rice moulds, which we frequently get on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and only the well-known contrariness of grown-up people could have arranged things in this manner. Reasonable beings—such as boys—would give us the unattractive things on half-holidays and the attractive on all the other days. They might even go further than this: they might abolish milk puddings altogether, and substitute something equally harmless but much nicer, such as jelly. Anyone could play cricket after jelly, no matter what the quantity, and there can be no question as to its attractiveness. It has a nice, sloshy feeling, when you squash it between your tongue and the top of your mouth, that has a great fascination for people of refined tastes, who do not measure enjoyment by chewing. I should, myself, certainly give jelly twice a week if I kept a school.

Talking of refinement, of course I admit some boys haven't got any. In fact, some boys are pigs. If you doubt it, I can tell you of something that happened at our school the other day. There was a chocolate lying in the yard. Some careless ass had dropped it there. And Mr. Carden's dog, Skittles, came up and sniffed at it. I'm not sure that he didn't lick it. Anyway, whether it was the smell or the taste that put him against it, I don't know; but he didn't like it, and he moved off, looking contemptuous and disappointed all in one—the way you

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know, a dog does when he gets a sell of that kind. Smith minor and some more of us saw it happen; and when Skittles moved on, Smith minor made a dive for the chocolate and picked it up. He had no shame about it. He even said to Skittles: "Well, if you won't have it, I will." And he meant it. I'm ready to swear to that. But when Mr. Carden (who saw it all, too) came up behind him and called him a dirty little beast, he said: "Of course, I was only joking, sir." If Mr. Carden believed that, he must have been greener than lettuce. I saw Smith minor slip the choc. into his pocket, and I heard him ask one of the big boys immediately afterwards if it would kill a person to eat something a dog had sniffed at, supposing the dog were to develop hydrophobia later on. He just kept the choc. in his pocket "pending inquiries," as the newspapers say; and I'll bet anything you like that he ate it later on, when no one was looking. If this doesn't convince you that Smith minor is a boy without refinement, it must be because you don't want to be convinced.

"It is always on Saturdays that our relations and friends choose to come."

But to return to cricket, from which I have been wandering. It is a very poor show on half-holidays, for the reason I have just mentioned, and yet it is always on Saturdays that our relations and friends choose to come and look on. This is quite enough to give the school a bad name, for of course they are bound to take away with them the impression that they have seen us at our best, or at least at our average, which is very far from being the case.

Talking of our average reminds me of something else about Smith minor. One day, in the small boys' reading-class, that word came in, and Mr. Carden asked him: "What is an average?"

"A sort of nest, sir," said Smith minor.

"A sort of *what?*" said Mr. Carden.

"Well, perhaps it's a box with straw in it," said Smith minor, "the sort we have in our hen-house at home."

He had got very red by this time, and was fidgeting like mad, as he always does when he thinks there's a chance of someone's laughing at him.

"I'm afraid I don't follow your train of thought," said Mr. Carden very politely. "Take your time, and try to explain why you think an average is either a nest or a box with straw in it."

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"Because—because," said Smith minor, nearly blubbing, "it's something that hens lay on. I don't know anything about it myself, but I've heard our man say that our hens laid three dozen eggs a week on an average, and—and——"

But Mr. Carden was howling so loud that if Smith minor had anything else to say, he didn't hear what it was; and presently Smith minor was howling, too, only in a different way. And then Mr. Carden pretended to be sorry for him, and told the others not to laugh—which was beastly unfair.

However—to get back to the subject of this article—I must say that, although Mr. Carden can be an awful beast in school, he can be jolly decent in the playing-field, and is just as keen on games as we are ourselves—especially cricket. He makes very scathing remarks sometimes, but they are only intended to improve our play; and one should make allowances when one remembers that almost everyone has a besetting sin, and the chief fault in Mr. Carden's character is a want of consideration for the feelings of boys.

To prove this, I can tell you another thing about Smith minor; but I must apologise for going back to such a long time ago as when the last Census was taken. Smith minor wasn't quite seven then, and had only just been sent to school. He was obliged to face the troubles of life at an early age, because his people had gone to India.

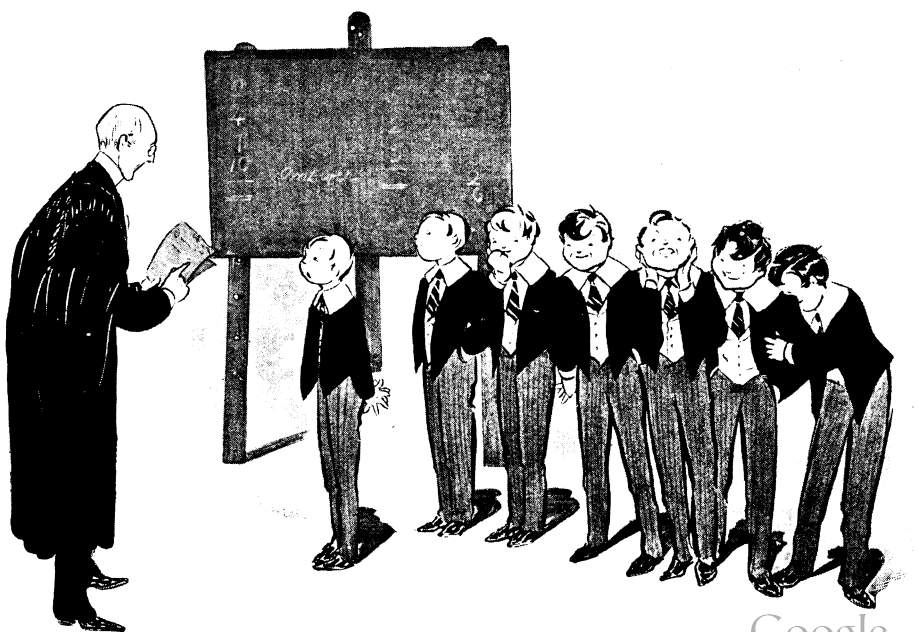
You know that column at the end of the Census paper where you are directed to make an entry if anyone is deaf, dumb, blind, or imbecile? Well, after we had all handed up our ages and so forth (I, myself, being very young at the time), Mr. Carden turned to Smith minor and said—

"Now, this is a very important paper, and the penalties are heavy if it is not correctly filled in; so be careful about your answer. Are you deaf, dumb, blind, or imbecile?"

Of course the poor little beggar took for granted that he was bound to be one of the four. He was sure enough that he was neither deaf, dumb, nor blind, and he didn't know what imbecile was, so he thought he'd be safe if he fastened on that.

"Please, sir, I'm only imbecile," said he, and—but I think it is kinder to draw a veil over the scene that followed, and I shall not even try to describe Smith minor's feelings, as I imagine them to have been.

On reading over what I have written, I find that I have said very little about cricket, and a good deal about grub and Smith minor; but it is now too late to make alterations, and I have come to the end of my paper. (It is dangerous to bag more than half-a-dozen sheets of my father's foolscap at a time, and I write an unfortunately large hand.) Therefore, I must let my article go as it is, hoping in a future one to make up for my omissions concerning cricket.



"'Please, sir, I'm only imbecile.'"

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"COME UNTO THESE YELLOW SANDS!"

FROM A DRAWING BY A. L. BOWLEY.

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Photo by] [*Argent Archer, Kensington.*

MEALS IN CAMP, WAREHAM.

HOW SOLDIERS ARE FED.

By HORACE WYNDHAM.

THE commissariat system obtaining in the British Army at the present date is of comparatively recent growth. Not so very long ago there was no system at all—that is, it was regarded as no one's special business to supply the fighting man with food. The soldier lived chiefly by plunder, levying contributions on the country generally. If these were withheld, he called his sword into requisition, whereupon the supplies demanded soon became forthcoming. Of course, this practice led to great abuses, and many and bitter were the complaints it occasioned.

For a long time, however, they fell on deaf ears. The Government continued to neglect its obligations, and the soldier preyed upon his fellows unchecked. It was Good Queen Bess who put a stop to this state of things. This she brought about by appointing a "Provient Master to the Troops," an officer who occupied much the same position that the Quarter-Master General does nowadays. The functions of this individual were, according to Sir James Turner—an historian of the period—somewhat varied in their nature. Thus, in addition to furnishing rations, it was laid down that "He hath the inspection of them and should see them equally and proportionately divided to the regiments. He hath the ordering of all the magazines for victuals, and to him belongs the care of seeing the garrisons and fortified places sufficiently provided with such meats and drinks as are most fit to preserve; these are corn, grain, and meal of several kinds; stock fish and all other salted fishes; salted and hung fleshes, especially beef and bacon; cheese, butter, almonds, chestnuts, and hazelnuts; wine, beer, malt, honey, vinegar, oyl, tobacco, wood and coal for firing; and as many living oxen, cows, sheep, and swine, hens and turkeys as can be conveniently fed; for which purpose, as also for horses, he is to provide straw, hay, and oats." The daily allowance for a soldier of these spacious days was, it may be remarked, two pounds of bread and half this quantity of either meat or cheese; with two bottles of beer or one of wine, to wash it down with.

Liberal though this scale sounds, it is to be feared that the troops of the sixteenth,

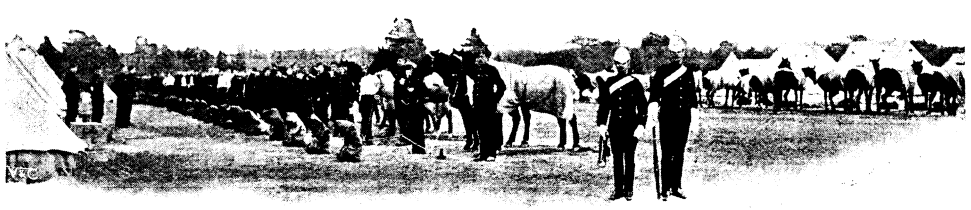

Photo by] [*Argent Archer, Kensington.*

HORSES' FEEDING-TIME, 1ST LIFE GUARDS.

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seventeeth, and eighteenth centuries nevertheless fared badly. The "Provient Master," it seems, did not take his duties seriously. After a time, accordingly, his office was abolished. Short commons then became general, for "certain covetous men of warre" (as an old writer calls them) thought it no shame to rob the soldiers of their allowance. At length the evil arrived at such a pitch that a Government official was specially appointed to supervise all provision contracts. This brought about a marked improvement, but a good many abuses still flourished, with the result that the troops were frequently half starved.

Photo by [*W. Gregory and Co., Strand.*

THE CANTEEN, 2ND LIFE GUARDS.

It was not until after the Indian Mutiny that the commissariat department was formally taken over by the War Office. The preliminary efforts of the new staff were devoted to rescuing it from the state of chaos into which it had fallen. Some years were occupied in this, and many changes had to be introduced into the administrative system. The time, however, was well spent, for it has resulted in giving England the best-fed army in the world.

On the importance of supplying troops with good food and plenty of it, every general —from Moses to Kitchener—has insisted. Napoleon's aphorism, "An army marches on its stomach," is universally accepted without demur. Tents and transport can be dispensed with at a pinch, but not rations. Bread, indeed, is of far more service in the field than bullets. It is said of Picton that he inclined to this view to such an extent that he once had a soldier shot for throwing away a sack of flour in order to make room for ammunition. The Iron Duke, too, held very strong views on the necessity for feeding his troops well, and during the Peninsular campaign would never commence a day's operations until he had first satisfied himself that the commissariat arrangements were in proper working order.

Photo by [*W. Gregory and Co., Strand.*

COOKS, 1ST COLDSTREAM GUARDS: "SPUD-PRACTICE."

One of the principal charges against the War Office in the conduct of the Crimean war was that it paid no attention to the

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food supply of the Army. This accusation, however, is an unjust one, for, although the arrangements were improperly carried out and thereby occasioned great suffering, the matter was given considerable attention. The great Soyer himself, the famous *chef* of the Reform Club, was specially despatched to the seat of hostilities for the purpose of superintending the culinary department. He took himself very seriously, and invented a patent stove for the preparation of meals in a short time. He also drew up a series of *menus* for use in the field. These were afterwards reprinted in an official "Manual of Military Cooking," which became a standard work in the Service. Some of Soyer's recipes were of a most elaborate description—more suitable, in fact, for a Lord Mayor's banquet than a barrack-room—but his intentions were undoubtedly good. While, however, giving particulars for the preparation of various dainty *plats* that soldiers are never likely to become acquainted with, the distinguished *chef* did not disdain to furnish instructions for making such simple dishes as rice-puddings. He also wrote learnedly on the art of boiling potatoes.

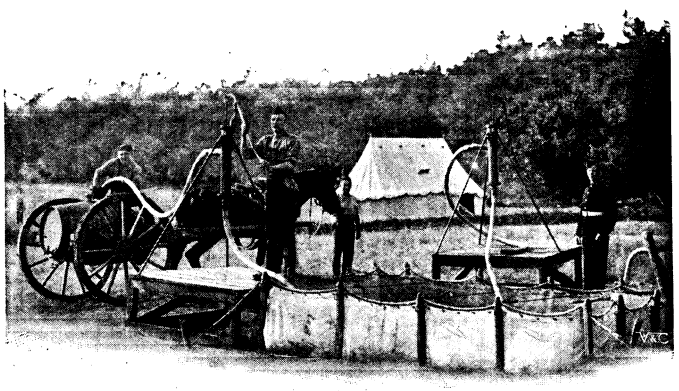

Photo by] [*Argent Archer, Kensington.*

FILLING WATER-CASKS IN CAMP.

In addition to the Soyer manual already referred to, three or four others, dealing with such kindred subjects as meat inspection and the care of utensils, have since been published. These form part of the equipment of present-day military "cook-houses" (as kitchens in barracks are always termed).

The first rule of such establishments is: "Everything must be scrupulously clean." This is rigidly insisted upon, as is also a second rule: "Skim, simmer, and scour." Smoking is forbidden on the premises—except as regards the chimneys—the sergeant-cook (who rules the roasts in barracks) being held strictly responsible that these matters are attended to. Should he neglect any of them, he is liable to all sorts of penalties.

One or two of the official handbooks on military cooking appear to be somewhat humorously compiled, for they give minute directions for the making of many dishes that never by any chance figure in barrack-rooms. Among such are omelettes with fine herbs, blanc-mange, jellies, pancakes, and muffins. However, there is nothing like being prepared for contingencies, and the soldier is accordingly provided with recipes for these dainties, as well as for the simpler dishes in daily use. The commonest among these latter are, after plain roasts and boils, those known as "sea-pie" and "toad-in-the-hole." The former is made of meat mixed with vegetables and flour, and steamed for three hours; while the latter is a succulent preparation of meat, egg-powder, flour, and milk. In either case, the allowance of meat is 45 lb. for every sixty men. Another popular item in the bill of fare is "Turkish pillau," the ingredients of which are meat, rice, flour, herbs, and onions, seasoned with cayenne pepper. In India, curry looms largely in the daily *menu*.

The allowance of meat in the British Army has been fixed for many years past at ¾ lb. per head per diem. This with ordinary care is found to be ample, and, when eked out with vegetables and pudding, serves for a good square meal at midday. Refrigerated beef, in lieu of the fresh variety, may be issued in a proportion not exceeding sixty per cent. of the total weekly issue. This is always of excellent quality, while it is also in all probability much better than that which the average recruit has been accustomed to. Nevertheless, Mr. Atkins is rather inclined to turn up his nose at it, and when it appears on the dinner-table, affects to see in it the remains of dead and gone commissariat mules. However, he seldom has much difficulty in getting outside his share.

With a view to ensuring that the meat issued for troops shall be of the quality stipulated for in the contract, every joint is inspected by trained experts before it is accepted. Nowadays it is very seldom that

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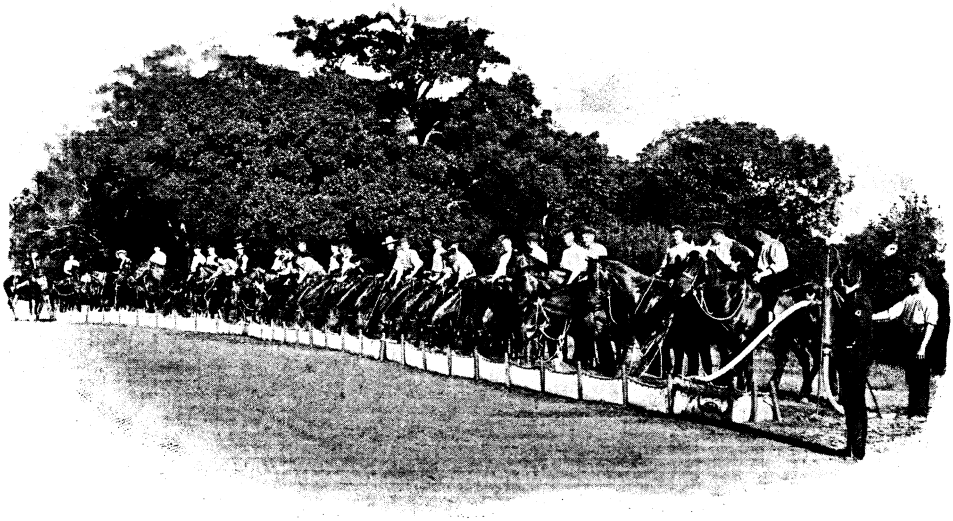

Photo by] [*Argent Archer, Kensington.*

WATERING HORSES IN CAMP.

any just cause for complaint arises, but at one time purveyors were not too scrupulous. A favourite device on their part in certain stations abroad was to palm off goat-flesh for mutton. A zealous quartermaster in the Ionian Islands, suspecting this practice on a certain occasion, thought he would assuredly defeat it by ordering that all the legs of mutton sent in by the butchers should have the tails attached. The Greek contractor smiled knowingly, but promised compliance, and for the next few days every joint was delivered in the manner required. The quality of the meat, however, did not improve; on the contrary, it had a more "goaty" flavour than ever, and loud and bitter were the complaints of its consumers. At last the mystery was solved. One day when the inspecting officer picked up a leg of mutton to weigh it, the joint fell to the ground, leaving the tail in his hand. Subsequent investigation showed that it had merely been sewn on with thread.

The "Advantages of the Army" include three meals a day—breakfast, dinner, and tea—but in most battalions a light supper is also provided. A soldier's official ration-allowance consists of 1 lb. of bread and ¾ lb. of meat per diem; tea, coffee, vegetables, and "extras" (such as butter, jam, eggs,

Photo by] [*Argent Archer, Kensington.*

1ST LIFE GUARDS CONSTRUCTING A FIELD-KITCHEN IN CAMP.

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Photo by W. Gregory and Co., Strand.

THE STAFF OF LIFE. BAKING BREAD IN CAMP.

fish, etc.) being provided regimentally. Breakfast is served at 8 a.m., dinner at 1 p.m., and tea at 4 p.m. The different bugle calls that summon the troops to these are learned by even the most unmusical of recruits with a promptitude that calls down upon them the scorn of the sergeant-major. "Ah!" he observes sarcastically, as the inspiriting notes of the dinner-bugle make them rush off to the cook-house, "that and the pay-bugle are about the only two calls some of you'll ever manage to learn!"

To most of the bugle-calls soldiers have attached words of their own. Those for the dinner-one, for example, are—

Pick 'em up! Pick 'em up! Hot potatoes!
Hot potatoes O!

Photo by W. Gregory and Co., Strand.

1ST COLDSTREAM GUARDS PREPARING MEALS IN THE FIELD.

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While for the evening mess-bugle there is the couplet—

> The officers' wives have puddings and pies,
> But poor Tommy Atkins has skilly!

—a statement which, by the way, is quite unfounded.

Bread for the use of the troops is nearly always baked by the Army Service Corps. It is commonly referred to in barrack-room parlance by its Hindustani name, *ruti*. The loaves weigh 2 lb. each, and are made from a quality of flour known in the trade as "best seconds." For hospital consumption, however, the "best household" variety is furnished. The issue takes place every morning about 7.30 a.m., the regulation allowance being 1 lb. for each man. A part of this is eaten at breakfast-time, the remainder being saved for dinner and tea. As bread in itself is not particularly appetising, various "relishes," such as fish, bacon, eggs, or fried liver, with either butter or jam, are purchased from the canteen out of the "grocery allowance." This only amounts to twopence a day, but as it is drawn for a considerable number of men in a battalion, it is quite enough to provide a good supply. Dinner is, of course, the chief meal of the day in barracks. It consists mainly of the roast beef of Old England (or, as has been explained, of New Zealand), with potatoes. On most days in a week, a pudding or jam-roll is added. A highly prized delicacy is "plum-duff." It generally makes its appearance on a Sunday, and is a most solid and substantial affair. It takes an experienced man, indeed, to tackle a second helping. Abroad, when it is both plentiful and cheap, fruit often figures in the bill of fare.

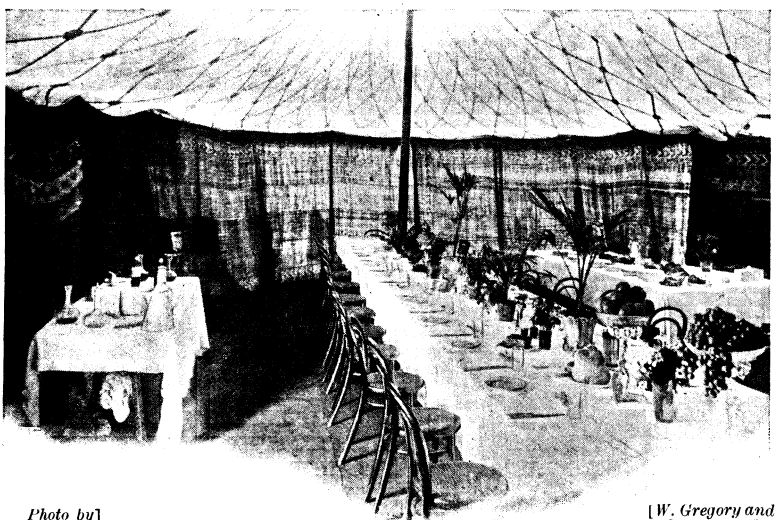

Photo by] [*W. Gregory and Co., Strand.*

OFFICERS' MESS IN CAMP.

Photo by] [*W. Gregory and Co., Strand.*

COFFEE-BAR, 1ST LANCASHIRE FUSILIERS. THE CANTEEN'S RIVAL.

At both breakfast and dinner attendance is compulsory, and a roll-call is held to see that everyone is present. An officer also comes round the barrack-rooms at these times to inquire if there are "Any complaints?"

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Photo by] [*W. Gregory and Co., Strand.*

SCOTS GUARDS CLEANING UP COOKING UTENSILS AFTER A MEAL.

Tea, however, is an informal meal, and the men present themselves for it or not as they please. It is served at four o'clock, and consists of tea and bread-and-butter. By the way, teapots, together with cups and saucers, are apparently considered as effeminate luxuries, for they have no place in barrack-rooms. The tea is made in large tin pails (ready mixed with milk and sugar), and each man's allowance is poured out for him into a basin. It is not until a soldier wins his three stripes, and accordingly has the *entrée* of the sergeants' mess, that he sees either a teacup or a table-cloth.

In the British Army, the cup that cheers is brewed of Congou, obtained from China. The quality is officially described as "good medium." A mixture of this with Assam and Orange Pekoe is also recommended by the authorities, as being both economical and refreshing.

Supper, like tea, is not a recognised meal

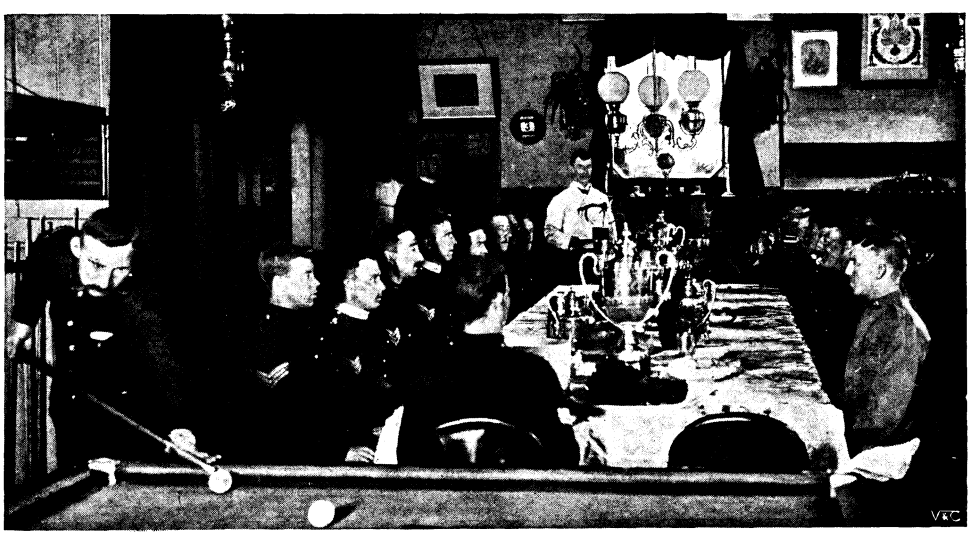

Photo by] [*W. Gregory and Co., Strand.*

SERGEANTS AT DINNER, 1ST LANCASHIRE FUSILIERS.

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in that attendance thereat is insisted upon. If a man likes to go out of barracks and get supper elsewhere, he is quite at liberty to do so. With those remaining in barracks, the regimental coffee-shop usually drives a roaring-trade between 7.30 and 9.30 p.m. Soldiers who patronise these establishments, as well as teetotalers (for nothing more intoxicating than lemonade is allowed to be sold therein), are called by those who prefer the dubious delights of the canteen, "bun-stranglers." The food in the coffee-shop is sold at as nearly cost price as possible, and a man can make a good meal for threepence. A varied *menu* is always arranged, the favourite items therein being liver and bacon, fried eggs, and sausages and potatoes. For beverages, there are tea, coffee, and cocoa, or mineral waters.

In the "Manual of Military Cooking," it is laid down that "to cook rapidly and well is an art which can be easily acquired and which every soldier should learn." It has long been recognised, however, that cooking does not come by nature, and that even its rudiments cannot be acquired until they have first been taught. The principal place where this important matter is attended to is Aldershot, where the Army School of Cookery has been in existence for more than thirty years past. The establishment is under the charge of a staff-officer, with a sergeant-major and four N.C.O.'s as instructors. It is conducted as a training-school for soldiers desirous of qualifying for the post of sergeant-cook. About forty of these prospective *chefs* are under tuition at a time, the course extending over a period of sixteen weeks. The training is of both a practical and theoretical nature, and embraces the whole subject, from the washing up of dishes to the construction of field-kitchens, with work at the range and lectures in classrooms. Certificates are awarded to those who reach the proper standard of proficiency. The holders of these then rejoin their regiments, and, as opportunity offers, are promoted to the post of sergeant-cook, and as such take charge of the kitchen arrangements in their own battalions.

Roughly speaking, these arrangements are as follows: A battalion of infantry consists of eight companies. For each of these, two privates are employed as cooks, and have between them to prepare their comrades' meals. The number of men for whose benefit they expend their skill is about ninety. It will be seen, therefore, that their post is no sinecure. Upon the sergeant-cook devolves the general supervision of this

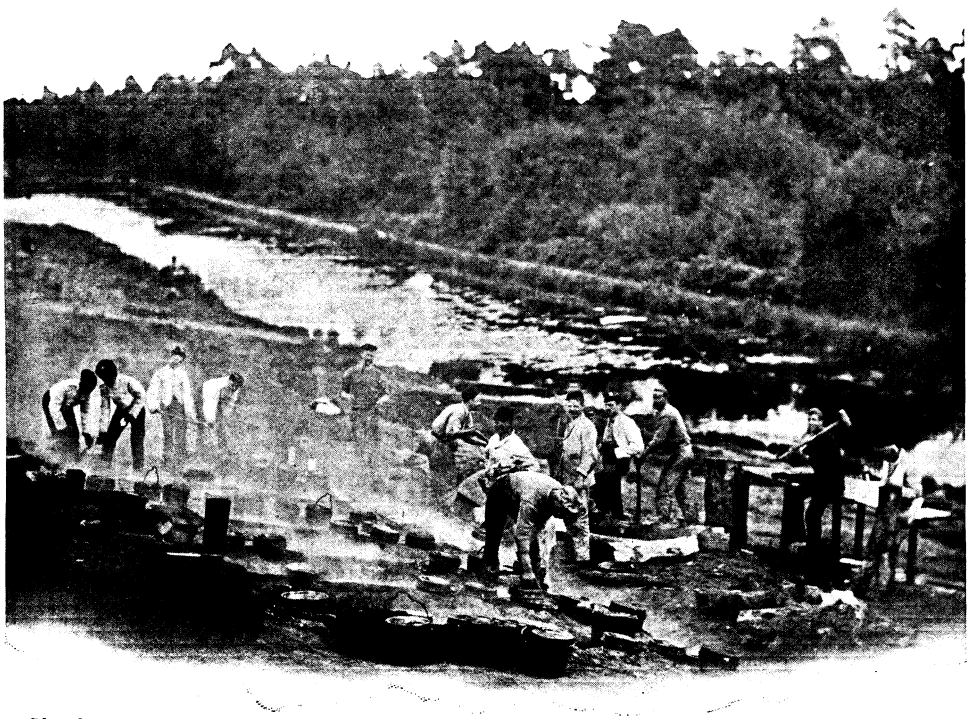

Photo by] [*W. Gregory and Co., Strand.*

THE REGIMENTAL CHEFS AT WORK IN THE FIELD.

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Photo by] [*Argent Archer, Kensington.*

1ST LIFE GUARDS SERVING OUT THE DINNERS.

staff of sixteen. He is also required to instruct his subordinates (some of whom are rather raw, as they come straight from the barrack-room) and see that they make the best of the materials at hand; to vary the daily *menu* as much as possible; and to keep a watchful eye on the fuel consumption. His work commences at half past six (or earlier) in the morning and finishes with the serving up of tea at four p.m. For his labours he draws sixpence a day in addition to his pay as sergeant.

As space is limited in a military cook-house, and a great many meals have to be prepared at the same time, a number of ingenious labour-saving appliances are in use. The principal among these is known as a "Warren's Apparatus." It takes the form of a close steam boiler, oven, and plate-warmer combined, and is so constructed that roasting, baking, boiling, and frying operations can be carried out in it simultaneously. It also ensures great economy of fuel.

At twenty minutes to one every day, the cook-house is visited by the orderly-officer. It is part of this individual's duty to inspect the dinners and certify that they are properly cooked or otherwise. All the dishes, accordingly, are withdrawn from the ovens at his approach and placed in rows on the floor. The sergeant-cook then submits each company's *menu* and awaits the verdict on his efforts. While the inspection is supposed to safeguard the soldier's interests, it is not very easy to see its value. The fact is, until cooking is included in the Sandhurst curriculum, a newly joined subaltern can scarcely be expected to say, by merely looking at it, whether meat is properly roasted or not.

Sergeants and officers have their meals prepared in the kitchens attached to their own messes. The officers' mess *chef* is nearly always a civilian (very often a Frenchman), who is paid anything from £100 a year upwards. In the sergeants' mess, the cook is a private soldier, specially appointed for his superior skill.

In camp and on manœuvres, as also on active service, "field-kitchens" have to be constructed as the troops move from place to place. The patterns in common use are two in number. The simplest kind is merely a shallow trench, lined with brushwood, and cut if possible on a slope. At one end is a rough chimney, made out of sods of turf. "Service kettles," of a holding capacity of three gallons each, are the vessels in which the food is cooked. Three of these trenches suffice for an entire battalion.

When a fairly long halt is contemplated, a "gridiron" kitchen is made use of. This is a somewhat elaborate piece of work, and occupies a non-commissioned officer and twelve men eight hours to construct. It consists of nine parallel trenches, twelve feet in length, running from a thirty-six feet transverse trench. The opposite ends are conducted into a flue, from which rises a pyramid-shaped chimney, six feet in height.

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This is built of turf and rushes, plastered with clay.

As evidence of the ingenuity of soldiers, it may be mentioned that when in the field, beer-barrels are often converted into serviceable ovens. All that is necessary is to set the barrel upright on a trench and knock out one end. The interior is then filled with fuel, and the top and sides thickly covered with clay. When the fire is lit, the woodwork burns; the clay, however, is held together by the iron bands, and the resulting shell thus forms the oven.

Beer in camp is issued very sparingly. The canteens are only open for its sale during certain hours, and no man is allowed to purchase more than a couple of pints a day. This is generally found to be enough; some soldiers, however, seem to have an extraordinary capacity for drinking, or else manœuvring is provocative of extreme thirst, as they have no difficulty in disposing of six times the regulation allowance. A story is told of a private who, patronising the canteen too freely, was brought up the next morning for drunkenness. "Now, Murphy," said the Colonel, "tell me the truth, and I'll let you off lightly. Were you drunk yesterday?" "Certainly not, sorr," was the indignant reply. "Oh, come," returned the other, "you don't mean to tell me you didn't drink any beer at all?" "Well, your Honour," answered Murphy candidly, "I wasn't what you would call squiffy, but I don't mind admitting *I did have a few quarts.*"

Sir Evelyn Wood, perhaps more than any other officer, has always taken a special interest in the soldier's feeding. When he was in command at Aldershot, he issued a pamphlet showing how the troops' rations could be made the most of. Before the appearance of this *brochure* the amount of waste that went on unchecked in barracks would have made the average housewife's hair stand on end. Bones, for example, were often thrown away wholesale, while a great deal of meat and vegetables that should have furnished stock for soup went to feed the contractor's pigs. Sir Evelyn, however, soon put a stop to this state of things, and, under his *régime*, waste came to

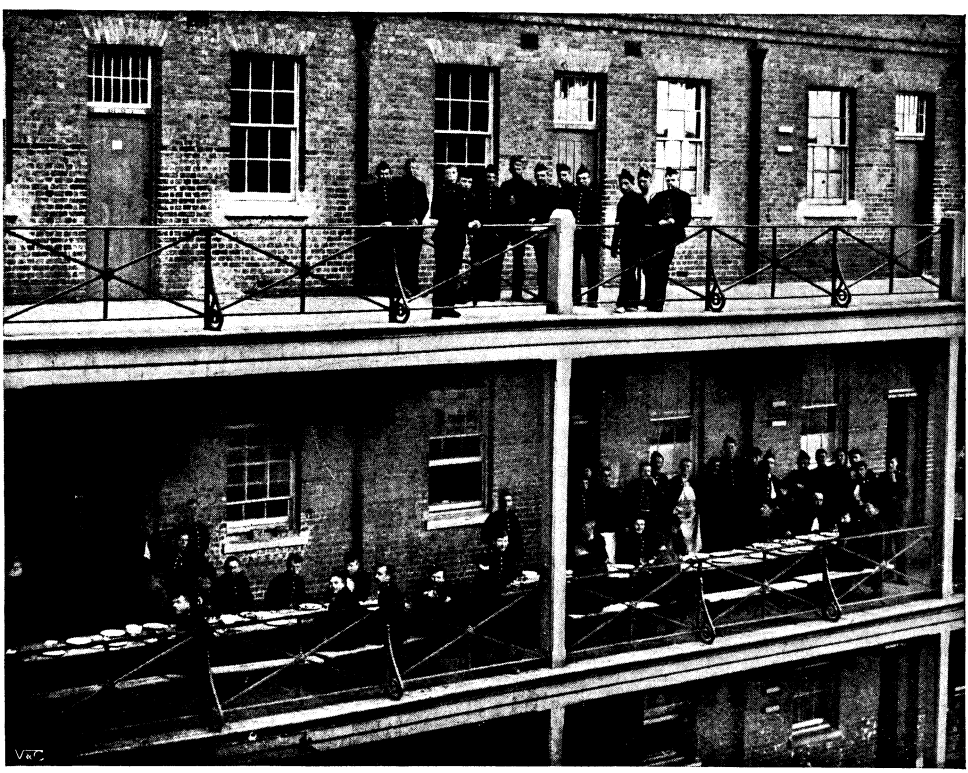

Photo by] [*W. Gregory and Co., Strand.*

QUEEN'S ROYAL WEST SURREY REGIMENT AT DINNER.

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be regarded as only slightly less criminal than lack of cleanliness in the cook-houses. As showing what small economies will do, it may be mentioned that the value of the dripping (which at one time was not considered worth keeping) saved by a single battalion now amounts to £160 per annum.

When troops are employed on active service, a large amount of food has to be sent out to the seat of war from this country, for dependence can seldom be placed on local supplies. Huge quantities of military rations

Photo by] [*W. Gregory and Co., Strand.*

FOR THIRSTY SOLDIERS.

Photo by] [*Argent Archer, Kensington.*

PACKING UP COOKING UTENSILS WHEN A CAMP IS STRUCK.

are kept for this purpose at Woolwich and despatched anywhere at very short notice. The stores are of all descriptions, some of the sheds being full of nothing but jam, while others are crammed from floor to ceiling with preserved vegetables. "Bully beef" (*i.e.*, tinned meat) is also greatly in evidence at Woolwich, over a million pounds weight of this commodity passing through the establishment for distribution to various garrisons both at home and abroad every week. As for biscuits, the amount handled is even greater, while tons upon tons of flour, sugar, salt, and spices, etc., etc., are also received and issued throughout the year.

The scale of rations in the field is always more liberal than the one obtaining in time of peace.

Photo by] [*W. Gregory and Co., Strand.*

CAMP-FOLLOWERS.

During the late campaign in South Africa, the daily allowance for each soldier was as

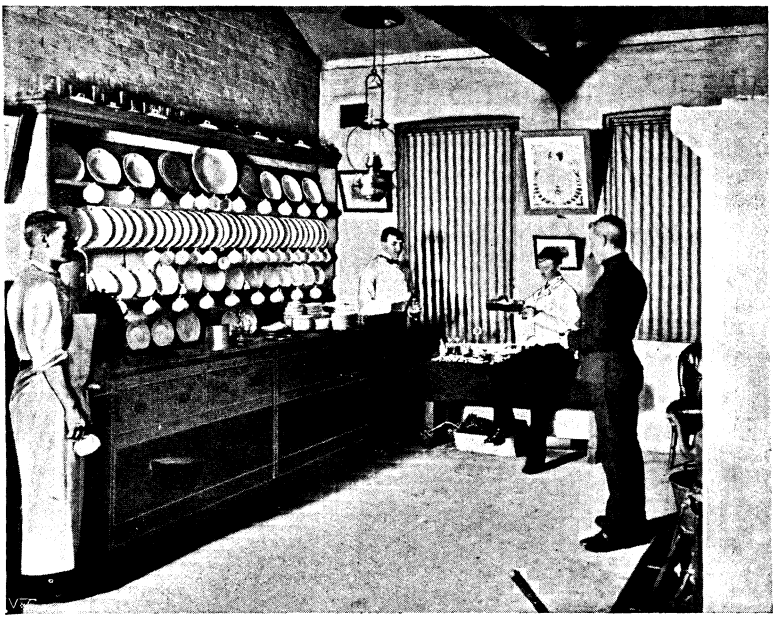

Photo by] *[W. Gregory and Co., Strand.*

SERGEANTS' MESS KITCHEN, 1ST LANCASHIRE FUSILIERS.

follows: 1¼ lb. of bread, or 1 lb. of biscuits; 1 lb. of meat; ½ lb. of vegetables; 4 oz. of jam; 3 oz. of sugar; one-sixth oz. of tea; one-third oz. of coffee, with salt and pepper.

Each man also carried an "emergency ration," consisting of 4 oz. of cocoa paste and 4 oz. of concentrated beef, packed in a tin. As for the horses and mules, they consumed nearly 900 tons of forage daily. In six months the British force had sent out to it from this country:

Preserved meat and biscuit	32,000 tons.
Vegetables	8,000 ,,
Jam	4,000 ,,
Sugar	3,000 ,,
Coffee	340 ,,
Tea	70 ,,

In round numbers, 50,000 tons of food are required every thirty days for a force of 50,000 men, with the necessary proportion of horses and mules. These figures may, perhaps, help to show the taxpayer why the late war in South Africa was so expensive.

THE DREAMER.

DREAMS, dreams! Though the world is all about thee,
Hidden in mists where gleams no sun of ours,
Passion and pain have lost the power to rout thee,
Happy amid dream sunshine and dream flowers.

Sleep deep!—what gain is in the waking?
Some plainer goal to guide thy groping feet?
Some skill to spare a heart from gainless aching?
Better the dreams that keep thy nature sweet!

Dream thy dreams! Who knoweth if they be not
Real as this man-wrought mirth and sorrow seem?
Men made the earth-scars that thy closed eyes see not,—
God made the soul that fashioneth the dream.

BURGES JOHNSON.

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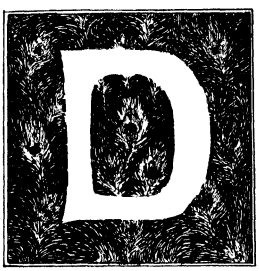
THE PANELLED ROOM.

By HALLIWELL SUTCLIFFE.*



ENNIS BYRNE had not gone to the meet to-day. One of his hunters was lame, the other had had a stiff day yesterday; so Dennis, perforce, had taken his gun and had shot till the sun went down, and now, at five in the afternoon, he was standing with his back to the fire and was smoking a cigar with great apparent content.

Indeed, if one came to think of it, he had reason for content. The cosy hall in which he stood was part of the cosiest, if the most rambling, house in Tipperary; it had secret panels and a ghost; and house and secret doors and ghost were all at the service of Dennis Byrne, so long as he observed one condition.

But that one condition was the drop of bitter. He was thinking of it now. He had thought of it a good deal during the past month.

"Grandfathers are a nuisance, a confounded nuisance!" he muttered, "particularly when they're both stiff-necked and sentimental."

He was roused by a tap at the door and the entry of his discreet manservant.

"Miss O'Rourke to see you, sir."

Dennis Byrne was young, and he was ardent; he scarcely gave his man a decent interval in which to retire before he had rushed at his visitor and caught her in a wild embrace.

"Dennis, Dennis, don't eat me up!" pleaded his guest.

He set her free at last, and as she stood away from him and turned her face towards the lamplight, there seemed excuse for Dennis Byrne. Small, slender, supple as a wild thing of the woods in her close-fitting riding-habit, she had the eyes and hair and wonderful soft skin that only Ireland knows.

"So you've dropped in for tea, Molly?" he cried. "It's terribly improper, and we'll snatch a fearful joy from it while we have the chance. Molly O'Rourke, do you know just how good it is to see you?"

Miss O'Rourke slowly took off her gloves; then stood before the fire, much as Dennis had been doing awhile since, and tapped her boot with her riding-whip.

"We've had a splendid run, Dennis, and a splendid kill at the finish; and my way home lay past your gate; and so, as I was thirsty——"

"Thank you, Molly. Of course, you only came for the tea. Two poached eggs with it, eh?"

"If you won't think me greedy. I'm dreadfully hungry, as well as thirsty."

He was watching her presently as she sat and literally gobbled down her eggs; it seemed very good that Molly O'Rourke should come like a streak of sunlight into the old house.

"It is lucky you did not arrive two hours or so later," said Dennis.

"And pray, why?" demanded Miss O'Rourke, attacking the dish of muffins.

"Because my revered grandfather—Sir Patrick Byrne, no less—does me the honour to dine with me to-night. He has travelled from Dublin for the privilege of seeing his heir."

"Well, what of that? Would he whip me, Dennis, or carry me off to his ogre's cave, or——"

"You don't understand, Molly," broke in the other, a frown of perplexity across his forehead. "When I asked you to marry me—and I just couldn't help myself, mavourneen—I did not tell you all. They think that I shall be the old man's heir—and so I shall, on one condition."

"And the condition is?"

"It sounds so daft, Molly. He—he is old, you see, and nurses some old love affair that went wrong in his youth. The lady was the belle of Tipperary, if Sir Patrick is to be trusted; and she married someone else, as Sir Patrick himself did; and it seems she has a grand-daughter as beautiful as herself. Now, Molly, don't—don't trouble about the old

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man's whim, for the whole thing is too absurd. He wants me to marry this grand-daughter, and that is the condition he has made?"

Molly O'Rourke flicked a crumb or two from her habit. "And you, Dennis? Will you care to lose all this?" she said, with a glance round the hall.

"Yes, I shall care," he answered hotly—"for your sake. I can give up my hunters, after a bit of heart-ache, but I can't let *you* share that sort of heart-ache."

"Oh, yes, you can, Dennis, if I make you. But this is all so strange; I cannot grasp it. Is Sir Patrick in his dotage, or is this his sober wish?"

"Well, he still rides to hounds, and he talks like the Blarney Stone when the humour is on him, and they say he is the wittiest man in Dublin. No, he is scarcely in his dotage; but on this point he is simply mad."

"And the grand-daughter? Have you seen her, Dennis?" asked Miss O'Rourke slowly.

Dennis laughed ruefully. "I don't even know her name. That is part of the ridiculous scheme. The grandmother, it seems, was twenty when she declined Sir Patrick's hand; the—the girl I am supposed to marry is only nineteen yet, and he has a whim that we should be betrothed on the day he was refused. Molly, it is too stupid! That a hard-drinking, hard-riding old buck like Sir Patrick should even think of such nonsense seems outrageous. Yet, there's his plan cut and dried: I am to be presented to the lady on a certain day, to offer my hand in half an hour or so, and the two of us are to receive a well-earned blessing."

"There are two difficulties in the way," said Molly O'Rourke, still more slowly: "One is that you *may* not offer your hand at all."

"Extremely likely. And the other?"

"That she may not accept it. Oh, yes, Dennis, you needn't think that, just because I happen to think you a pretty boy——"

They laughed, like the youngsters they were, and as suddenly grew grave again.

"That is the reason of his coming here to-day," said Dennis. "I wrote, intimating that I was in love, and that I renounced all further claims on his kindness. He is going to try persuasion."

There was a fine light of tenderness in the blue eyes of Molly O'Rourke as she came and rested both hands on his shoulders.

"Dennis, I will not let you do this thing," she said. "You shall not ruin yourself for me."

"Will you wait for me, if I go out and work—work for you, Molly? There will never be anyone else in my life, dear; you know that."

"But see this other first, Dennis; she may be——"

"She will never be Molly O'Rourke."

And, somehow, they were in each other's arms again, until at last the girl, to cover her confusion, began to wander round the hall, with its trophies of the chase and battlefield.

"Do you know, Dennis," she said whimsically, "I should regret that secret chamber more than anything, if you were to lose the old place. It is so full of—of Ireland, you know. When Cromwell came, good men have sheltered there; long before Cromwell's time, your people have found refuge behind this wainscot. All the battles and the love-tales of the past seem to have stolen here, too, for shelter."

She pushed back the sliding panel absently and looked into the little chamber, with its table and its cupboard, which had baffled many a search.

"I wonder what it felt like, Dennis, to be shut up in there, and to listen to Cromwell's ruffians as they tramped about the floor on the outside, and to——"

She stopped on a sudden, for Dennis had clutched her by the arm.

"Molly, do you hear that voice?" he whispered.

Miss O'Rourke, still with one hand on the secret panel, turned towards the door. "Yes; what of it, dear? It sounds a pleasant voice, with a touch of the old brogue in it."

"That is the man who can talk like the Blarney Stone—that is Sir Patrick—he has come before his time," said Dennis tragically. "Listen, he is talking to my man; he will be here in a moment."

The girl paused for awhile, then laughed softly. "I shall learn what it feels like to be hidden in the secret chamber. Close the panel, Dennis, and when the ogre leaves you for a moment, come and let me out."

She had slipped into the room already, after securing gloves and riding-whip. Sir Patrick's voice came nearer, along the narrow passage that led from the hall to the main door. In a moment Dennis had slipped the panel into place and had turned to greet his grandfather.

A fine figure of a man was Sir Patrick Byrne, and he entered with a certain spacious

"So Dennis, perforce, had taken his gun and had shot till the sun went down."

Google

self-assurance which was a relic of a generation gone.

"You are very welcome, sir," said Dennis, advancing with outstretched hand.

"Not so sure of that, my boy. I have come to talk to you. So you've been hunting?" he added, with a glance at the remnants of Molly's tea.

"No; shooting, sir."

"Well, it seems to have given you an appetite. For my part, I like a drop of good liquor at this time of day, and a dinner sharp to the hour."

Dennis hastened to mix his grandfather a stiffish glass of whisky, and weakly beckoned him into a seat. He was feeling strangely ill at ease, and his eyes would keep wandering towards the secret panel.

"You have had a good journey, sir?" he asked, as soon as they were seated, one on each side of the hearth.

"Yes, yes. I looked to reach here two hours later, but the saints looked after me at the junctions. Now, Dennis, we'll just talk over this business and then we'll enjoy ourselves, my boy."

There was certainly nothing of the dotard about Sir Patrick Byrne. His air was crisp, and suggested that Dennis, as a matter of fact, would yield to the stronger will. Perhaps it was this assumption of the stronger hand which brought out the boy's latent stubbornness.

"Indeed, sir, there is nothing to talk over," he said, quietly. "I am pledged to another lady, and in any case——"

"Bedad, and what are you going to keep her on?"

"My wits and my hands, sir, if I can find work for them to do."

Sir Patrick chuckled, as if he liked the temper of the reply; then his face hardened again.

"See you, Dennis," he said, "I'm an old man, and you're a callow one. I have chosen your wife for you, and it is a pony to a shilling that I have made a better choice than you. I have seen the world and its women, my boy, and I tell you you'll win the sweetest girl in Ireland."

"I have done that already, sir," said Dennis, with great outward calm, and great inward misgiving as he glanced towards the panel and remembered that Molly must, perforce, hear all that Sir Patrick might have to say.

"Wait until you have seen *her* grandchild. I haven't had the heart to see her myself, but they tell me that she is just her grandmother grown young; and that's enough for Patrick Byrne."

"Sir, there is no question of choice."

"That means you think this beggar-maid of yours is better than the other. Bedad, sir, twenty years ago I would have called you out for that and put a bullet in you at twenty paces."

Dennis was still calm, though wrath was eating inwards. "She is not a beggar-maid; her birth is better than our own."

"There's another bullet for you, my boy. The Byrnes were old in Tipperary before the rest were heard of. By the saints! even to-day I'd fight any man but you who said the contrary."

Molly O'Rourke, listening from her hiding-place, was conscious only of a great desire to laugh. It seemed to her—what Dennis, in his wrath, was slow to see—that this self-willed Sir Patrick was, after all, an Irishman, and not one-half so ogrelike as he would fain appear. Then, too, the thought of Dennis with two imaginary bullets in him, gained in affairs of honour, was one to rouse her mirth.

"You are fond of the old place?" said Sir Patrick, changing to a fresh key.

"It is part of my life, sir."

"So am I, but I dare not live here, Dennis. It holds too many memories. No thanks to me that you have free run of the house; I never lived here after Molly said her 'No' and sent me racketing to Dublin. So you will let all go? You will be a beggar in a ditch, and all for a lad's love-fancy?"

"I will, sir."

Molly, in her retreat, no longer wished to laugh. It was pleasant to hear Dennis tried, and not found wanting.

"It is an old wish of mine, Dennis."

For the first time the youngster softened. The sadness in Sir Patrick's voice was unmistakable, and there was something oddly pathetic in this devotion which had survived his marriage and hers, which had lain in lavender, as it were, through all the racket and the stress of years. The whim might be absurd, but the romance that underlay the whim was not laughable at all.

"I know it is an old wish, sir," said Dennis gently; "it hurts me to refuse you."

One keen glance Sir Patrick gave him, then glanced away from the topic, as if he were willing to wait for a more yielding mood in Dennis.

"I am glad that you have respected my wishes in one thing, boy," he said, looking round the hall again. "You have made no changes of any sort. Why, the room—even

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"'There will never be anyone else in my life, dear; you know that.'"

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"As they played with their dessert the old man glanced at Dennis."

to the position of the oak chairs there—is just as it was when Molly came, five-and-forty years ago—came after hunting, to ask for refreshment and to tease me as she loved to do. I can see her, standing on the left of the hearth there, with her little figure in its riding-habit——"

Dennis was staring at his grandfather. Had the old man peeped through the window awhile ago, and seen Molly—the real Molly—standing in just such an attitude beside the hearth? Was he poking fun at him? But that suspicion died, for there was no mistaking the earnest, far-off look upon Sir Patrick's face.

"My plans for you have some excuse, after all," went on the elder. "It was here that I told Molly of my love, here that she refused me; and I had hoped—had hoped—well, to see you, my boy, happy with her grandchild in this same room, and to sit and watch you, and to live again in the fancy that Molly and I had come together, after all. Heigho! We will talk of this again. Dennis, my boy, do you know the odd, creepy feeling it gives you to return to an old house after deserting it for years? The very panels seem to speak."

Dennis began to fidget unmistakably. There was one panel which could speak disastrously, and Sir Patrick was looking at it now. Would the old man never go to his room and give Molly a chance of escape from her imprisonment?

"There was a secret room just to the left of the portrait there," went on Sir Patrick, nodding to indicate its situation. "Gad, what games I had there as a youngster! I must have a peep into it, if only for old times' sake."

"Sir, it is—it is impossible!" stammered Dennis.

"Indeed?" put in Sir Patrick, with good-humoured irony.

"The—the servants, you understand, sir, were—were afraid of the ghost—couldn't get them to stay on any account—they said the ghost pushed open the secret panel and entered the hall that way."

Sir Patrick was eyeing him distrustfully, and Molly, laughing quietly in her retreat, decided that Dennis, poor boy, was not gifted as a romancer.

"Humph! I never heard of a ghost before that could open a solid panel," growled Sir Patrick. "Thought they slipped through without further trouble."

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Dennis was gripping the arms of his chair. "There is no accounting for servants' superstitions, sir—particularly Irish servants. I had to—to screw up the secret panel, just to satisfy them."

Sir Patrick rose and crossed the hall. "That was a pity, Dennis," was all he said.

Dennis watched as he idly felt the panel—watched the panel slide back—watched the sudden straightening of Sir Patrick's figure, as if someone had thrust at him from the secret chamber.

The lamplight shone full upon the opening—full upon Molly O'Rourke, standing with her riding-switch and gloves in one hand, while the other rested daintily on her hip. And Molly O'Rourke, do as she would, could not subdue the radiant look of gaiety that brightened eyes and cheeks.

"Molly—Molly O'Rourke!" gasped Sir Patrick, with a break in his voice.

"At your service, Sir Patrick," she answered, with a curtsy.

Pure comedy the scene had been till now; but suddenly the old man staggered to the table and bowed his head upon it, and sobbed as men do just once, perhaps, in their old age.

Molly and Dennis Byrne looked helplessly at one another; but, by and by, Sir Patrick rose and pulled himself together, and changed his mood with a quickness that was truly Irish.

"Molly O'Rourke," said he, "I claim a kiss on the ground where your grandmother refused one five-and-forty years ago."

She lifted her cheek to him, in a pretty way of her own, and Sir Patrick drew her to him.

"How—how did you know my name?" she asked, bewildered by the quick progress of the drama.

"How? Why, you're Molly O'Rourke herself—the Molly I have loved my life through—not aged by a day, bedad, while I shall soon be going on crutches."

A light broke in on Dennis. The girl of his heart was the girl of Sir Patrick's choice, and all had been a playing at cross-purposes until the lucky opening of the panel.

"Molly—Molly came to have tea with me, sir," he put in; "and then you came, and—and I thought——"

"You thought I might bully Miss O'Rourke?" chuckled Sir Patrick. "Well, so I should, if she had happened to be anyone *but* Molly O'Rourke. As it is, she can twine me round her finger at any moment of the day."

They dined together a few evenings later, and Sir Patrick's eyes kept stealing with a strange wistfulness, to the face and figure which were those of his lost love. Yet the humour would crop out, and as they played with their dessert the old man glanced at Dennis.

"My boy," he said, "it's a big relief, all this. If you'd married to please me, you see, you'd have gained a fortune and lost my respect; if you'd married against my will, you'd have gained my respect and lost the fortune. Molly O'Rourke, you've won him both!"

ANNIVERSARY.

IT seems the year remembers and it brings
Across the hillsides a familiar light,
The orchard-lands put on accustomed white,
And all old-time beloved springtide things
Come back for welcome: flower and bird and leaf,
Each in its place, cry out against my heart,
As if the very springtime guessed the part
It held in this dear festival of grief.
Ah, you, that for a year have been with God;
Must the soft splendour of this wistful day
And I keep faith—alone remembering?
Your daffodils blaze in the garden sod,
Your apple boughs drift white in their old way—
Is Heaven so far you do not know it's spring?

ARTHUR KETCHUM.

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THE TERROR OF THE AIR.

By C. G. D. ROBERTS.

FROM all the lonely salt-flats and tide-washed, reedy shores of the wide estuary, the flocks of the sea-ducks had flown south. After feeding for days together amicably, Golden-eye and Red-head, Broad-bill and Dipper, all hobnobbing and bobbing and guttering in company, without regard to difference of kin, they had at last assorted themselves into flocks of the like species and wing power, and gone off in strong-flying wedges to seek milder tides and softer skies.

Nevertheless, though the marshy levels were now stiffened with frost, and ice-fringes lingered thin and brittle behind each retreating tide, and white flurries of snow went drifting over the vast, windy spaces of wave and plain, some bold, persistent waifs of life clung to these bleak solitudes. Here and there a straggler from the flocks, or a belated arrival from farther north, fed solitary and seemed sufficient to himself; while here and there a few hardy coots, revelling in the loneliness and in the forbidding harshness of the season, swam and dived among the low, leaden-coloured waves.

Across ten level miles of naked marshland another estuary made in from the sea. On the shore of this estuary, so shallow that for leagues along its edge it was impossible to distinguish, at high tide, just where the water ended and the solid land began, a solitary surf duck dabbled among the grey, half-frozen grasses. Of a dull black all over, save for a patch of clear white on his head and another on the back of his neck, he made a sharp, conspicuous spot against the pallid colouring of the marshes. For all his loneliness, he seemed to be enjoying himself very well, active and engrossed, and to all appearances forgetful of the departed flocks.

Suddenly, however, he stopped feeding, and sat with head erect and watchful eyes, rising and falling gently with the pulse of the sedge-choked flood. Either some unusual sight or sound had disturbed him, or some drift of memory had stirred his restlessness. For several minutes he floated, forgetful of the savoury shelled and squirming creatures which his discriminating bill had been gathering from among the oozy sedge-roots. Then, with an abrupt squawk, he flapped noisily along the surface of the water, rose into the air, and flew straight inland, mounting as he went to a height far above gunshot.

The flight of the lonely drake was towards the shores of the other estuary, ten miles southward, where, in all likelihood, he had some hope of finding the companionship of his kin, if not a better feeding-ground. Though his body was very heavy and massive, and his wings ridiculously short for the bulk they had to sustain, he flew with tremendous speed and as straight as a bullet from a rifle. His wings, however small, were mightily muscled and as tough as steel springs, and they beat the air with such lightning strokes that the sturdy body, head and neck and legs and feet outstretched in a rigid line, was hurled through the air at a speed of something like a hundred miles an hour. As he flew, the flurries of snow gathered into a squall of whirling flakes, almost obscuring the waste of marshland that rushed past beneath its flight, and shutting him off alone in the upper heights of sky.

Alone indeed he imagined himself, while the cold air and the streaming snowflakes whistled past his flight. But keen as were his eyes, other eyes keener than his had marked him from a loftier height, where the air was clear above the storm-strata. A great Arctic goshawk, driven by some unknown whim to follow the edge of winter southward, was sailing on wide wings through the high, familiar cold, when he saw the black drake far below him. Shooting through the snowflakes like a missile, his fierce eyes flamed and narrowed, his wings gave one mighty beat and then half closed, and he dropped into the cloudy mirk of the storm-belt.

The drake was now about a hundred yards ahead of the great hawk, and flying at, perhaps, ninety miles an hour under the mere impulse of his desire to reach the other estuary. When he caught sight of the white terror pursuing him, his sturdy little wings doubled the rapidity of their stroke, till he shot forward at a rate of, perhaps, two miles a minute, his wedge-shaped body and hard, oiled plumage offering small resistance to the air even at that enormous speed. His only

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chance of escape, as he well knew, was to reach the water and plunge beneath it. But he could not turn back, for the terror was behind him. Straight ahead lay his only hope. There, not more than two or three minutes' distant, lay his secure refuge. He could see the leaden grey expanse, touched by a gleam of cold and lonely sunlight which had pierced the obscurity of the squall. Could he reach it? If he could, he would drop into the slow wave, dive to the bottom, and hold to the roots of the swaying weeds till the terror had gone by.

A hundred yards behind came the hawk, moving like a dreadful ghost through the swirl and glimmer of the snow. His plumage was white, but pencilled with shadowy markings of pale brown. His narrowed eyes, fixed upon the fugitive, were fiercely bright and hard like glass. His hooked beak, his flat head, his strong, thick, smoothly modelled neck, were outstretched in a rigid line like those of the drake.

The long, spectral wings of the great hawk beat the air, but not with haste and violence like those of the fleeing quarry. Swift as his wing-beats were, there was a surging movement about them, an irresistible thrust, which made them seem slow and gave their working an air of absolute ease. For all this ease, however, he was flying faster than the fugitive. Slowly, yard by yard, he crept up; the distance from his victim grew narrower. The drake's wings whistled upon the wind, a strange, shrill note, as of terror and despair. But the wings of the pursuing destroyer were as noiseless as sleep. He seemed less a bird than a spirit of doom, the embodiment of the implacable Arctic cold.

The astounding speed at which the two were rushing through the sky on this race of life and death, brought the gleam of the estuary water hurrying up from the horizon to meet them. The terrible seconds passed. The water was not half a mile ahead. The line of the drake's flight began to slope towards earth. A few moments more, and a sudden splash in the tide would proclaim that the fugitive was safe in a refuge where the destroyer could not follow. But the noiseless wings were now just behind him—just behind and above.

At this moment the fugitive opened his beak for one despairing squawk, his acknowledgment that the game of life was lost. The next instant the hawk's white body seemed to leap forward even out of the marvellous velocity with which it was already travelling. It leaped forward and changed shape, spreading, and hanging imminent for the least fraction of a second. The head, with slightly open beak, reached down. A pair of great, black talons, edged like knives, open and clutching, reached down and forward.

The movement did not seem swift, yet it easily caught the drake in the midst of his flight. For an instant there was a slight confusion of winnowing and flapping wings, a dizzy dropping through the sky. Then the great hawk recovered his balance, steadied himself, turned, and went winging steadily inland towards a crag which he had noted, where he might devour his prey at ease. In his claws was gripped the body of the black drake, its throat torn across, its long neck and webbed feet trailing limply in the air.

A ROBIN IN THE RAIN.

THE springtime rains have beaten on the trees
And taken fragrant tribute from them all;
Crushed apple blossoms lie upon the wall,
Forsaken by the faithless honey-bees.
The saddest of the vernal days are these—
With every passing wind wet petals fall,
The birds forget their tender mating call
And sing no more their joyous melodies.

Nay, listen! Like the voice of silvered flute,
In brave, sweet cadence ever rippling on,
A hidden robin pipes his cheery strain!
Ah, Love! Thy lips and mine are sadly mute
When for the moment sun and hope are gone—
We have not faith to sing amid the rain!

MYRTLE REED.

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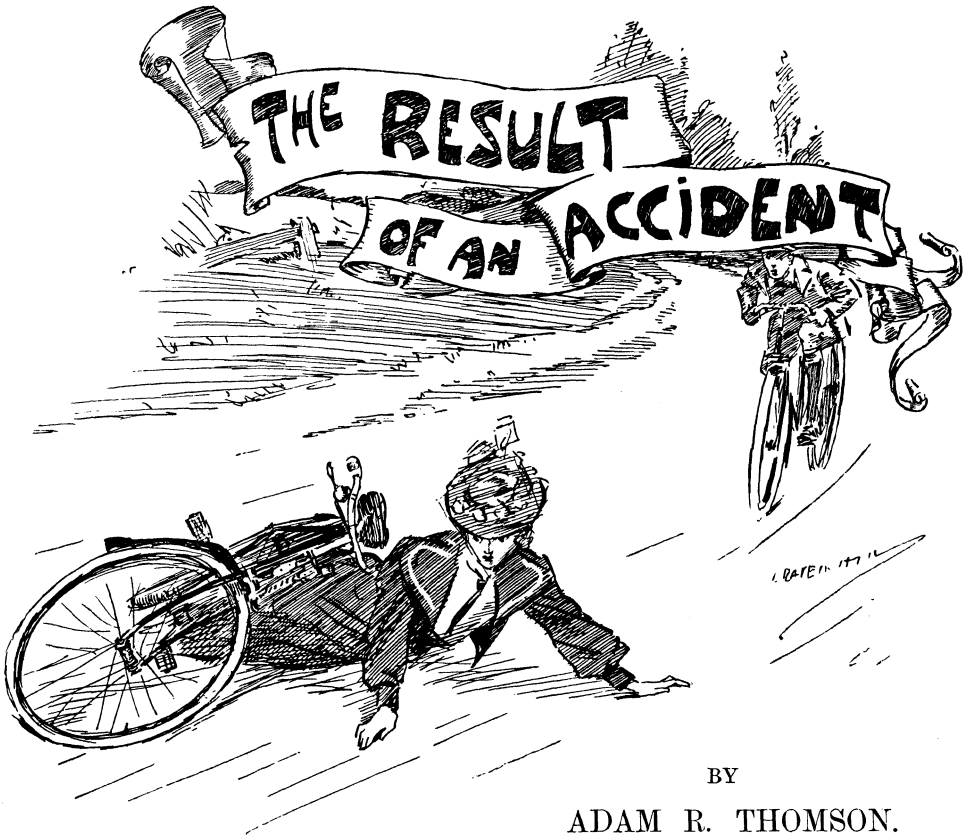

BY

ADAM R. THOMSON.

ONE warm Saturday afternoon in the early autumn, I, Arthur Rouncely, was riding my bicycle leisurely along a little-frequented cross-road near Highgate, when a cyclist of the opposite sex flew past me. She was young and pretty, and wore a red tie on a white blouse, with a hat and ribbon to match. I noted these details, because I have always considered red very becoming—to a good-looking girl. "Lovely!" I murmured involuntarily as she shot ahead; but the word had hardly passed my lips when, with a feeling of horror—not, perhaps, unmingled with a certain subtle satisfaction—I saw her fall heavily from her machine. A few moments brought me to where she lay motionless on the dusty roadway, and, hastening to dismount, I picked up her damaged cycle, propped it and my own against the hedge, and turned to her assistance.

"Are you hurt?" I asked simply, glad to observe that, at all events, she had not lost consciousness.

"Thank you," she replied, rising to a sitting posture, "not much; at least, that is, I put out my right foot to try and save myself, and it—it feels rather limp somehow. I ought to have avoided that large flint. I hope my tyre's not punctured."

"I'm sorry to say it is—rather badly, too. But never mind, I've got a repairing outfit with me, and I dare say I can mend it. Do you think, if I help you, you can get up?" I added sympathetically.

"I'll try," she responded gratefully, taking my proffered hand, but the effort proved a failure.

"If you wouldn't mind," I ventured tentatively, "I think you'd have a better chance with my arm round your waist."

"Should I?" she inquired demurely; "are you sure?"

"Positive," I said, with decision.

"Very well, then."

In this way I managed to raise her to an erect position, but she had no sooner let her right foot touch the ground than she gave a sharp cry and, but for my support, would have again fallen. At this I carried her without further ceremony to a patch of grass which skirted the road, and, putting her

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down as gently as I could, remarked that she had probably sprained her ankle.

Then for the first time she lost heart and began to cry.

"Oh, come," I protested, pained by her distress, "you mustn't do that, you know—you mustn't, really. You—you should be thankful it's no worse."

"No worse! Why, it's simply fatal."

"Fatal—a sprained ankle! Good gracious!"

She dried her eyes and glanced at me scornfully. "Fatal to my plans—perhaps to my future happiness," she explained.

I expressed my sorrow, and then, as she did not reply, I suggested that I should ride to the nearest hostelry and try to obtain a carriage in which she might be conveyed to her home.

"That is the last thing in the world I should permit you to do!" she cried, doubtless without reflecting that she was powerless to prevent me from carrying out the first part of the programme, at least.

"May I ask why?" I inquired.

"Why, because—because——" she glanced at me suspiciously. "I suppose *you* don't know my name and address?" she asked quickly.

"I am not so fortunate."

"I carried her without further ceremony."

"Oh! I'm glad of that; I thought perhaps you might. My father is a public man—he's on the Highgate Board of Health. I've occasionally been with him at functions, and it struck me as just possible you had seen us together."

"I'm not a resident in Highgate," I said; "I lodge at Canonbury. But now may I point out that you can't sit here all day? I shall have to do something to get you home."

She remained silent for a short time. Then she said suddenly: "I see there's no help for it, I shall have to trust you——"

"I shall not betray your confidence," I exclaimed emphatically.

"—to a certain extent," she went on, ignoring the interruption.

"One must be thankful for small mercies," I remarked humbly.

"Well, then, you can't take me home, because I'm off."

"Obviously." I glanced at her bicycle.

"I mean I've left home, and I can't go back."

"Not the way you came, but in a carriage——"

"I can't go back at all."

"Why not?

She paused. "I don't think I need tell you," she said at last, "but I've the best of reasons."

"You don't trust me very far," I remonstrated.

"No," she assented laconically.

"And yet I think I merit——"

"Oh! I'm much obliged to you for picking up my bicycle, if that's what you mean!" she cried hastily.

It wasn't exactly what I meant, but I didn't say so. I merely bowed.

"But," she went on, "I'm afraid you can be of no further service to me."

"Oh, nonsense!" I exclaimed. "I can't go away and leave you like this—it's preposterous! If you won't go home—and I suppose I can't make you—you'll have to go somewhere, won't you?"

"Yes, no doubt!" She looked up at me thoughtfully, then she suddenly asked the time.

"Half past two," I replied, consulting my watch.

"As late as that, is it? I wonder, now, if you could get to Clissold Park, Stoke Newington, before three?"

"I'm sure I could. I can get there in twenty minutes."

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"All right, then; I'll trust you a little further, after all. You shall go as fast as you can to No. 46 ——— Road and ask to see Miss Penelope Price."

I started. "Penelope Price!" I cried.

"Yes, do you know her?"

"I have met her. Like myself, she is a journalist."

"Yes, and my cousin. I have just spent three weeks with her. I only returned home on Thursday."

"Indeed! She is—ah—a—a young lady of advanced ideas, is she not?"

"She is a reformer, certainly."

"Put it that way if you like. She belongs to the London Demolitionist Alliance, a body which objects to things in general, and to—ah—marriage in particular."

"It is true. Penelope never tires of telling me how much she disapproves of marriage. I don't agree with her there, but I do agree with another of her theories."

"Which is——?"

"That whatever a person honestly thinks to be right, *is* right."

"Oh! It's a convenient notion, and a pretty old one. I can't accept it myself, though."

"Neither can my father. But we—we haven't time to talk about it now. Penelope's attitude on the marriage question makes it all the more kind of her to—to——" She broke off abruptly. "Well," she continued, "my cousin will be at the address I've given you, up till three, waiting for me. After that I don't know where she'll be, she has so many engagements. But if you start at once, you're bound to catch her; and—and you can tell her what's happened to me, and that *it* will have to be put off, and that she must console *him*—she'll know what 'it' refers to and who 'him' is. Say, too, please, that she must come here with a cab to fetch me to her rooms, where I propose to stop till—till 'it' can be brought off."

"I'll carry out your instructions," I said; "but what name shall I give Miss Price?"

"Name? Oh! Florrie will be enough. Now good-bye. You can describe this place to Miss Price, but you needn't come back yourself, of course; so, as we shall probably never meet again, let me repeat that I am very grateful to you for your kindness."

I was not entirely satisfied with this dismissal, but I durst not delay my start any longer, so without further ado I jumped on my bicycle and pedalled towards the main road for all I was worth.

I arrived at the house she had mentioned just five minutes before three, dismounted, and, glancing at a four-wheeled cab standing by the kerb, went forward to the gate of the house and placed my bicycle in front of the adjoining railings. Then I paused in front of a brass plate fixed to the gate, on which were inscribed the words—

"Office of the Superintendent Registrar
for North-East London."

"Why," I reflected, "my fair friend Florrie must have actually been on her way to get married! Evidently she——"

But before I got any further, I was seized from behind by two men, who, thrusting me forcibly into the cab I had just noticed, followed themselves and held me down, while the cabman hauled my bicycle on to the roof of the vehicle. The next instant we were being borne rapidly northwards.

II.

OVERWHELMED with astonishment and indignation at the sudden and inexplicable attack to which I had been subjected, I sat for a long time absolutely incapable of speech. I could only gaze stupidly at my captors, both of whom were totally unknown to me. There seemed a considerable difference in their respective social positions, for the man seated by my side at the rear of the vehicle was a big, burly fellow who looked like a porter of some kind, while the individual opposite, who was also of a stout build, was dressed in the style usually affected by the successful City man. A damask rose decorated his frock-coat, and a heavy gold chain glittered on his expansive white waistcoat. I judged him to be about fifty years of age.

It was he who at length broke the silence by remarking in a self-satisfied tone to my companion—

"You've assisted me well, Tyler, and I shall not forget it. Between us we have succeeded in frustrating a miserable, dishonourable, and unscrupulous rascal." And he was good enough to indicate by a wave of his hand that he applied these complimentary epithets to me.

"Thank you, sir," said Tyler briefly. "But how about the young lady, sir? We ain't seen her."

"No," replied the other; "but that's of little consequence. She can't make an idiot of herself now we've got this fellow safe. She'll be back home by to-night, and then—I shall know how to deal with her."

"You can't marry in them places after three," remarked Tyler meditatively, "and I

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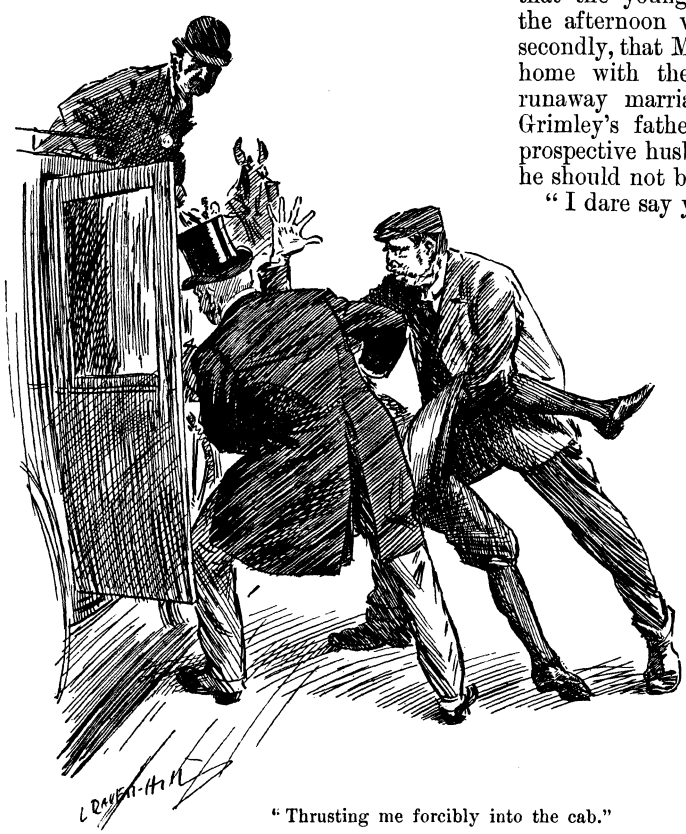
just heard it strike. It must have been close on the time when this—" he hesitated a moment—"this gent came up. Funny he was so late."

"Not too late for us—for me, Tyler. Not too late for the explanation we're going to have by and by. Look you, sir"—for the first time he addressed himself to me—"we don't part till we have had a very full explanation indeed. I intend to render a repetition of this farce an impossibility."

"An explanation," I said faintly, "is exactly what I most wish for. This outrage——"

"Outrage! You are right in terming it an outrage. To think that you should dare to delude my motherless daughter into—into—— Oh! I can't find words to express my abhorrence of such conduct as you have been guilty of, Mr. Sydney Belmont!"



"Thrusting me forcibly into the cab."

"There has been some mistake," I began, but he interrupted me fiercely.

"There has been a very great one. Not but what it would have been greater if the outrage you spoke of just now had been actually perpetrated. In that case I should have cut off my daughter without a penny."

"I don't understand how all this concerns me. I——"

"Oh! you shall be enlightened before I've done with you," he sneered. "You shall be made fully acquainted with my views; and so, for that matter, shall Florrie."

"Florrie!" I gasped, with a start which prompted Tyler, who imagined I meditated escape, to push me back in my seat.

"Yes, sir, Florrie!" he cried angrily—"Florence Grimley, whom you hoped no doubt to have made Florence Belmont ere this."

I made no reply, but the indignation I had hitherto cherished gave place to a feeling of amusement. It now seemed apparent—first, that the young lady I had met earlier in the afternoon was Miss Florence Grimley; secondly, that Miss Grimley had set out from home with the intention of contracting a runaway marriage; and thirdly, that Miss Grimley's father had mistaken me for her prospective husband. Well, for a little while he should not be undeceived.

"I dare say you wonder how I found you out?" said Grimley after a few moments' silence.

I nodded assent.

"Oh, well, I'll tell you that at once: I was warned by my niece."

"Your niece?"

"Yes. You seem surprised; but you must know very well I refer to Miss Penelope Price. You thought her your friend, didn't you?"

"I—I certainly was under that impression," I said with unfeigned surprise.

"You might have known better than to trust a young woman who, to the horror of her relatives, adopts views subversive of—of every generally accepted principle. She's betrayed you, Mr. Belmont."

I frowned. "How base!" I exclaimed.

"Base! It's the best action she ever performed, I should say."

"We needn't argue the point," I rejoined deprecatingly. "But what has she told you, pray?"

"Everything, Mr. Belmont. A letter from her delivered at my office just before

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"When Florrie saw us, she gave a little cry."

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two o'clock gave me full details. In it she intimated that while my daughter had been staying with her—a visit, by the way, to which I consented with much reluctance—she—Florrie, that is—had made your—your confounded acquaintance, and that, in short, you had arranged to be married. Then the letter went on to explain that Florrie thought it better that I, her father, should not be informed until after the event, forsooth, and for this reason the heathenish wedding had been fixed to take place at a quarter to three to-day, at the Registry Office we have just left. Finally, Penelope said she had intended assisting at the precious function, but had repented."

"But how, how did you know me?" I asked.

"That was easy. Penelope mentioned that your"—he laughed—"your honeymoon was to be spent cycling, and that you were going to ride to the Registry Office on your bicycles, and go straight away when the affair was over."

"Well," I said, "and now what are you going to do with me?"

"Do, sir? Why, this. I am going to take you to my house and make you swear solemnly on my family Bible, in the presence of witnesses, that you'll never marry my daughter Florrie."

"And if I refuse?"

"Then I shall administer personal chastisement."

"The deuce! Did you ever hear of *Habeas Corpus*, Mr. Grimley?"

"Pooh! The law has no terrors for me, sir. In my early days I've knocked about in parts of the world where each man learnt to be a law to himself. Besides, you are forgetting that your conduct has been so infamous that I have only to publish it to justify the strong measures I am taking."

By this time the cab was crawling up Highgate Hill, and I thought the moment had arrived for setting matters straight—so far as I was concerned, at least. So I said—

"You'd better direct the cabman to turn off to the left when we get to the Gatehouse Tavern."

"Why should I do that?"

"I'll tell you." And, speaking as quickly as I could, for fear he should interrupt, I managed to acquaint him with his daughter's accident, my own true identity, and the message with which I had been entrusted to Miss Penelope Price.

I never saw a man more taken aback in my life. He turned pale, fidgeted in his seat, and eventually, as if glad to get a breath of air, pulled down the cab window and, putting out his head, gave the driver the requisite instructions. Then he maintained a stolid silence until the vehicle pulled up at a spot near which Miss Grimley was to be seen, still seated on the grass.

"You go first," he murmured hurriedly, as we all rose. "I—I don't know how it is, but though I can be as hard as nails with men, I—I am not so successful with women. Florrie is sure to be very angry, and—and anger in a woman always makes me nervous. It's this feeling of mine that determined me to go for you—for the other fellow, I mean—rather than Florrie herself this afternoon."

"Oh! you want me for a sort of buffer, do you?" I laughed. But I jumped out of the cab and led the way towards the disabled girl, Grimley and Tyler following.

When Florrie saw us, she gave a little cry and, turning to me, exclaimed reproachfully—

"Oh! then, after all, you *were* a spy of father's! I might have known it."

"My dear," said Grimley softly, "my dear, you are wrong. But before I tell you how I have been able to thwart you, Florrie—you must forgive me for that, my pet—you'd better let us help you to the cab."

"As you please," she said coldly, and her father and I managed to get her into the vehicle, while Tyler attended to her bicycle, and at a sign from his master mounted on the box beside the driver. I thought the time had now come to say "Farewell," and hinted as much. Grimley, however, took me aside, apologised profusely for the manner in which he had treated me, and pleaded earnestly that I would accompany him home to dinner. "I—I can't be left alone in the cab with her," he urged.

Well, I had neither the heart nor, to speak the truth, the inclination to refuse, so I got into the cab beside them.

The explanation which ensued left us in the dark on one point only—this was, what had become of the intending bridegroom, Mr. Sydney Belmont? Mr. Grimley had seen nothing of him, although he had been in waiting with the cab outside the Registry Office from twenty minutes past two until my appearance just before three.

When we arrived at Grimley's residence, there was a letter for Florrie, which she instantly read. Then she gave a scream and went off into a dead faint. She was removed to her bedroom, and medical assistance was speedily obtained. I did not see her again

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that night, but before I left I heard that she was better.

Her sprained ankle confined her to the house for some weeks, during which time it was the merest politeness to make frequent inquiries as to her welfare. It was not till a certain day nearly a year afterwards, however, that, having in the meantime become the editor of an important evening newspaper, and having likewise been long aware that Mr. Sydney Belmont had proved false, I ventured to—— But never mind that. I was going to say that on the day in question she permitted me to peruse the communication which had given her such a shock on the afternoon of her accident. Here it is :—

"——— Road,
"Clissold Park,
" Sept., 1902.

"MY DEAR COUSIN,—

"If you have been disappointed to-day at Sydney Belmont not turning up, I hope you won't be angry with me when I tell you the truth about his absence. The fact is, dear, the poor fellow came to me yesterday in great distress to ask my advice. He said he had found that he had made a terrible mistake ; that—in a word, that he loved me and not you, after all. Should he go on with the marriage ? he asked. Well, dear, I gave him the only possible answer—I told him he must be guided by his feelings and marry me instead of you. This he promised to do ; but as I know the poor man is rather fickle in his affections (you, love, were the fourth girl he has fancied himself fond of in three months—I am the fifth), I deemed it prudent to give your father an opportunity of being at the Registry Office this afternoon, in case he should *think* he had changed his mind. If you are inclined to reproach me, I can only remind you that you have often assented to the theory by which I am always guided—namely, that whatever a person honestly thinks to be right, *is* right.

" With best love,
" Your affectionate
" PENELOPE PRICE.

"P.S.—I continue a Demolitionist, for I still object to marriage—in the abstract."

"Cool," I observed, handing the letter back to Florrie, " very cool. Did she marry him, then ? I haven't heard anything of her lately, so I suppose she did."

Florrie laughed merrily. " Yes," she replied, " and I wish them both joy. I—I can afford to now," she added softly a moment later.

"'I—I can afford to now.'"

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THE DISAPPOINTING PRISONER.

By WALTER E. GROGAN.*

HERE are few men in His Majesty's Army who do not know me, Jack Netherton, of the ——th Light Dragoons. In the hot time of the Peninsular war I saw many things and did many actions that are worth setting down. In truth we had a free time of it in the Peninsula—a hard life, it may be, but for a man with a stout heart it was none amiss. The lustre of the British arms was never greater than when the Iron Duke played his big game of chess on the Peninsular board and swept it clean at the last.

It was my luck, as I said, to see much of the game; and an adventure which befell me I will relate now. They were rough times, and some of the stories of my life are rough also; but we of the ——th took all things with a smile, which in truth is the best way in which to meet life or death.

A man six feet in his stockings, fair hair, a moustache, a beard when hardly worked, a clean chin when in decent quarters, a quick eye, a firm seat, a more than common knowledge of fence, some quickness with pistols, a light heart, an adorer of the sex, a man to fight or to make love with equal zest—so was I, Jack Netherton, lieutenant in the ——th Light Dragoons, when in the cold grey of a May morning I received the command of Brigadier-General Stewart to report myself immediately.

It was the day after our passage of the Douro, when we surprised the French so mightily. By Mars! 'twas a pretty affair, and we light horse carried ourselves very dashingly. That last affair, which, annoyed at General Murray's dilatoriness, we carried out ourselves, was as smart an affair as any light cavalry man might wish to see; and we are greedy fellows, we horsemen, I can warrant you.

But, then, to my tale.

I dressed myself quickly and was out in the cold of the morning, clattering up the stones of the street, twirling my moustache, and bringing my spurred heels down smartly, as a cavalryman should. At the house of a functionary of Oporto, I halted and rapped loudly at the door with the hilt of my sword. An orderly admitted me without delay and ushered me into a large room where the General and some officers of his staff were breakfasting. I saluted.

"A cold morning for May," the General said affably.

"We of the ——th find it so after the warmth of that last affair, General."

"Ah! draw up, Lieutenant. Major, pass the Burgundy."

I sat down and, nothing loth, helped myself to a bumper. Some knowledge of campaigns gave me the wisdom of never refusing good liquor, for the presence of the next bottle was ever a matter of some hazard.

Besides, in those days a man's life was a mere chance, and it might well be that, refusing the first, he should get no other offer.

"You are a good horseman, Lieutenant?" the General inquired, looking at me closely.

"They say so in the regiment, General."

"You are not averse to some risk?"

"I belong to the ——th," I answered proudly.

"Good." General Stewart nodded to his staff, and they nodded back at him very solemnly. "I have sent for you to undertake a matter of considerable peril."

"I am infinitely obliged to you, sir."

"It is imperative that General Beresford should receive despatches immediately. You are to take them. Sir Arthur Wellesley has entrusted the choice of the officer to me. I have chosen you."

"Again, General, I am obliged to you. General Beresford shall have them."

"You know the way?"

"To some extent. Be assured I shall find it."

"You are confident."

"I know myself and my horse, General."

"The peril lies in the scattered bodies of the enemy. Besides, the country is very

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"I commenced to lead the brute on the rough track the natives call a road."

much disturbed. The natives are not to be trusted."

"I trust only in my sword and my horse."

"Should you fall into the hands of the enemy, remember they must not capture the despatches."

"They shall not."

"But risk much to get through with them."

"If a man can do it, I will do it."

"When you have delivered them, return here and report yourself. General Beresford will entrust his answer to you. How long will you be?"

"If in four days I am not back, you will know that I am dead."

"Or a prisoner."

"Pardon me," I said rather stiffly, "I do not like to think of that chance. These French prisons leave much to be desired."

"Good," said General Stewart. "Here is a rough map of your route. There are the despatches. Remember, we rely upon you."

I saluted and returned to my quarters whistling an air. "Here," thought I, "is my first chance. I have been specially selected for an enterprise that requires courage and brains. If I carry it through successfully, it will be a great feather in my cap. It will serve to show that I have resource, ability, enterprise. I will carry it through."

It was still early when I clattered out of Oporto. My horse was in excellent fettle, well fed and well groomed; the air was cool and exhilarating, and I had no doubt of my ability to find Beresford's brigade.

That night I spent in a village whose inhabitants were well disposed, and from whom I gathered valuable information concerning the whereabouts of the column for which I was looking. The landlord of the inn joined me after dinner, and we drank confusion to the French in a couple of bottles of wine that dishonoured in no way the King's health.

The next morning I mounted again and reached General Beresford, having met with no adventure.

Beresford was in hot pursuit of Loisson's Corps. He read my despatches with attention and immediately indited a reply to Sir Arthur. This he gave me.

"Return as speedily as you can," he said; "but be wary, for our scouts report the presence of scattered bodies of the French between us and Sir Arthur's army."

I reined back and watched General Beresford's column march past.

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They were a well-seasoned, soldierly lot of men, and I felt my heart beat with pride as they swung by, eager to press on the retreating French.

The night was closing in when I shook my reins and clapped spurs into my horse's flanks. I was in the midst of wild, mountainous scenery—very beautiful, no doubt, to the traveller, but disconcerting to one carrying important despatches. Owing to the warning of General Beresford, I determined to make a *détour* so as to avoid all possibility of falling in with a detached body of the French or, what I dreaded equally, a party of brigands.

For four or five miles I rode steadily over very rough ground, keeping a short rein on my brute. Twice I handled the pistols in my holsters, thinking I detected some movement in the black shadows a ragged moon threw across my way. These suspicions came to naught, however, and as I rode forward my spirits rose. I whistled to myself, I rode more easily, I dreamed of the Burgundy I should find when I rejoined my regiment, and my heart warmed as I conjured up its generous taste.

"Netherton, my boy," I cried, "you are excellent! To-morrow you will have accomplished your mission. My boy, there are few who would have carried it out so successfully. There has not been the smallest hitch. This little affair will single you out as a man in a thousand. There are plenty of fools who would have ruined it; but not you, my boy, not you."

As I muttered this, my brute stumbled. I was riding easy at the time, and the sudden jolt sent me forward in the saddle. I gathered the reins up short, and my horse tried to recover himself, plunged forward, struggled, stumbled again, and nearly came to the ground. When I pulled him up, he was dead lame.

Here was a mess. I was awakened in the midst of all my fine dreams, to find myself with a lame horse the devil knew where.

"The rascal kneeling before me and promising to do anything for me if I would spare his life."

The night was growing overcast and the moon showed more rarely. I dismounted and, drawing the bridle-rein over my arm, commenced to lead the brute on the rough track the natives call a road. I wandered forward in the darkness, cursing my ill-fortune, for some hour or so, when I caught sight of a light ahead. By the side of a road was a mean-looking hostel. In the dim light I made it out to be a two-storeyed

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building. The place was in darkness, for, indeed, the hour was near midnight, but there was no choice left for me. I beat upon the door with my sword-hilt.

For a time there was no reply. I kept on knocking and shouting. Presently a window was opened abruptly just over my head, and a face peered down at me.

"Come, my good man," I cried, "I want a bed!"

The man answered in fluent Portuguese, a language totally unintelligible to me. For a moment I was nonplussed. But I am not a man without ideas.

"If I can't speak your infernal language and you can't speak mine, I have a friend who can speak both!" I cried, and taking one of my pistols, I cocked it at the villain's head, at the same time going through the motion of opening the door with my disengaged hand.

The rascal popped his head back, and presently appeared at the door, very pale, as I saw by the light of his lantern, and bowing most profusely. We stood thus for a moment, I in my long cavalry cloak, and he in a disreputable nightcap, an old jacket, patched here, gaping open there, all in a grievous plight, and a pair of breeches that had changed colour many times. Between us he held his misty lantern, that wabbled with the extreme terror of its master. All the while he kept on bowing and uttering a continual stream of Portuguese, which may have been complimentary, but which sounded rough and villainous enough for the most awful threats. I confess I liked but little the look of the man, but I was in such a sorry plight with my lamed horse that any chance was better than none.

Suddenly I thought to myself: "Does the rascal understand French?" I had a fair smattering of the language, so I tried him with it. The first words I uttered were electrical. Down went the lantern on the floor, and the rascal followed it, kneeling before me and promising to do anything for me that I wished if I would spare his life.

It flashed upon me at once that he took me for a French officer. It was but recently that we British had landed—our uniforms were not yet familiar to the natives; besides, my long cloak hid mine, and there is little difference between cloaks, whatever the army to which they belong.

His fright decided me. I would be a French officer for the nonce. To an Englishman, the natives might well be surly, for report had painted us as models of long-suffering. We were allies; therefore no Portuguese would put himself out of the way for us. With the French it was different. There was no tale of their cruelty too dreadful to obtain ready credence from the natives. Thinking thus rapidly, I determined to be French.

"Come!" I cried in that language, "pick up the lantern and show me the stabling!"

This he did with a profusion of protestations that all he had was mine, that I was noble and high born, and that his life was a poor thing and of no account, but that others depended upon his exertions for a scanty living, so that I would most surely spare it, for was I not a great officer? At the door of the stabling, which was small and in bad repair, my host was so overcome by his emotions that I had to take him by the scruff of his neck and shake him violently before I could persuade him to attend to the comfort of my horse.

By the light of the lantern I investigated the brute's hurt and found it but a sprain. I bandaged it as best I could with the help of my host, whose readiness to assist had been considerably enhanced by my rough treatment, and saw that it had food and bedding.

Then I strode back to the little hostel and into the parlour.

"Come!" I cried, "a bottle of your best wine; I care not what it is, so long as it be good."

"Your Excellency," he answered in as good French as he could muster—which, after all, was plaguey bad—"shall be served. A rare wine, a beautiful wine, a grand wine!"

"I'd rather learn its beauties on my own tongue than from yours, rascal!" I cried.

"Your Greatness, I will be speedy. And there is a bedroom above that is poor indeed for one so distinguished, but is clean, as I can swear."

"Nay," I answered, "I pass the night here. My friend, I am a soldier, and I prefer to meet my enemies on an equality. A room above is too high; an old campaigner always has an eye to a retreat."

I sat down in the most comfortable of the chairs and stretched my legs out. I kept my cloak carefully wrapped round me, so that mine host might catch no glimpse of my uniform. In five minutes I was alone, with a bottle at my elbow, blinking at the light of the evil-smelling lamp that poured filthy smoke upwards towards the ceiling. My host had disappeared. I could hear him

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moving about in the passage, grumbling to himself. His noise, filtered through the heavy door, increased the drowsy feeling which was stealing over me. I leant against the rough, massive table at my side. I blinked again and again at the winking light. The wine was full and generous. A delicious feeling of warmth and comfort stole over me. I pinched myself to keep awake. I looked at my pistols lying on the table, to make sure that they were within easy reach. I stretched out my hand half-way towards them. The light winked solemnly, my arm felt heavy and paused in the act of touching the pistols. I fell back in a doze.

My next conscious moment was when a very hazy dream disappeared at a loud noise close to my head. I sprang hurriedly to my feet, although yet but half awake. The lamp was still winking, but the door of the room was wide open, and before me, under the light, was a slim, beardless youngster in the uniform of a French lancer. Behind him was the host.

"Pardon, your Excellency!" cried the villain, "here is a comrade of yours who has missed the way." And with that he slammed the door, leaving us fronting each other across the table. On the table between us were my pistols.

"*Bonjour!*" said I, with my eyes riveted on the barkers lying like a bone between two dogs.

"A little late, sir; the day is somewhat distant." The youngster had a most effeminate voice and, had he not been in the uniform of a *sous-officier* of the French lancers, I would have sworn that he had a villainous accent. With all his swagger of bearing, I could swear to a tremor of the lip. He had his right hand on the butt end of a pistol.

"Come, Netherton," said I to myself, "a moment more, and the boy knows you for an Englishman. It is imperative to obtain your pistols; but you must be wary, for the youth may be handy with his barker."

"A glass of wine to our good fellowship!" I cried, stretching my hand towards the bottle that stood by the pistols.

"Sir, permit me," the youth answered quickly, at the same time stretching forth his arm towards the bottle.

I saw his game in a moment. He meant to seize my pistols. He had already noticed the minute difference between the British and the French cloaks. He had penetrated the thin disguise. I was discovered.

To know was to act. As his hand came groping towards the pistols, I seized his wrist. I am a strong man. The wrist of the boy was small, slim, girlish. My fingers closed upon it like a vice. The boy gasped with pain. He cried out.

"Ah! you hurt, monsieur!" he said, his small, oval face distorted with efforts to conceal the evidence of the anguish he felt.

"I was first, monsieur!" I cried with some exultation. Holding his hand thus firmly, I seized a pistol and levelled it at his head.

"Come," I said banteringly, "you have one arm free. Use it, I entreat you, monsieur, on my behalf. Slip that pistol out of your belt and place it butt-end foremost on the table within my reach. Don't raise it, for I am a quick-tempered man and shall most certainly shoot you at the first attempt you make to turn the tables on me. Ah! that's right. And now undo your sword-belt."

I watched the boy curiously. He was trembling a little and would not look straightly at my pistol. Besides this, he fumbled greatly at the buckle of his belt, a matter which caused me to believe that he had but recently joined. In truth, I was not a little sorry for him, for he was but a schoolboy.

"Now," said I, "you are my prisoner." I released his arm, still covering him with my pistol, and came round the table, gathering up his weapons and placing them beyond his reach. As I passed by the window I caught a gleam of dawn streaking the blackness.

"Yes, I'm your prisoner," the boy answered. "That being established, monsieur, may I remind you that the glass of wine remains unpoured?"

I laughed heartily. The boy had some spirit.

"Come, here's a bumper," I said, and slipping the pistol in my belt, poured the wine into a metal cup. As I was thus busied, the boy hastily drew something from his breast and held it to the flare of the lamp. It was a paper closely written.

At such times a man of quick resource is invaluable. It is such moments that stamp the born commander. Quick to reason and quick to act I ever was. Without a second's delay I dashed the lamp over. It fell with a splutter and was extinguished by the veriest good luck on the floor. Had it ignited the hostel, the consequences might have been serious. In the darkness I caught the boy, and luckily by the hand which contained the paper. I seized it. The boy leant down suddenly and, while I

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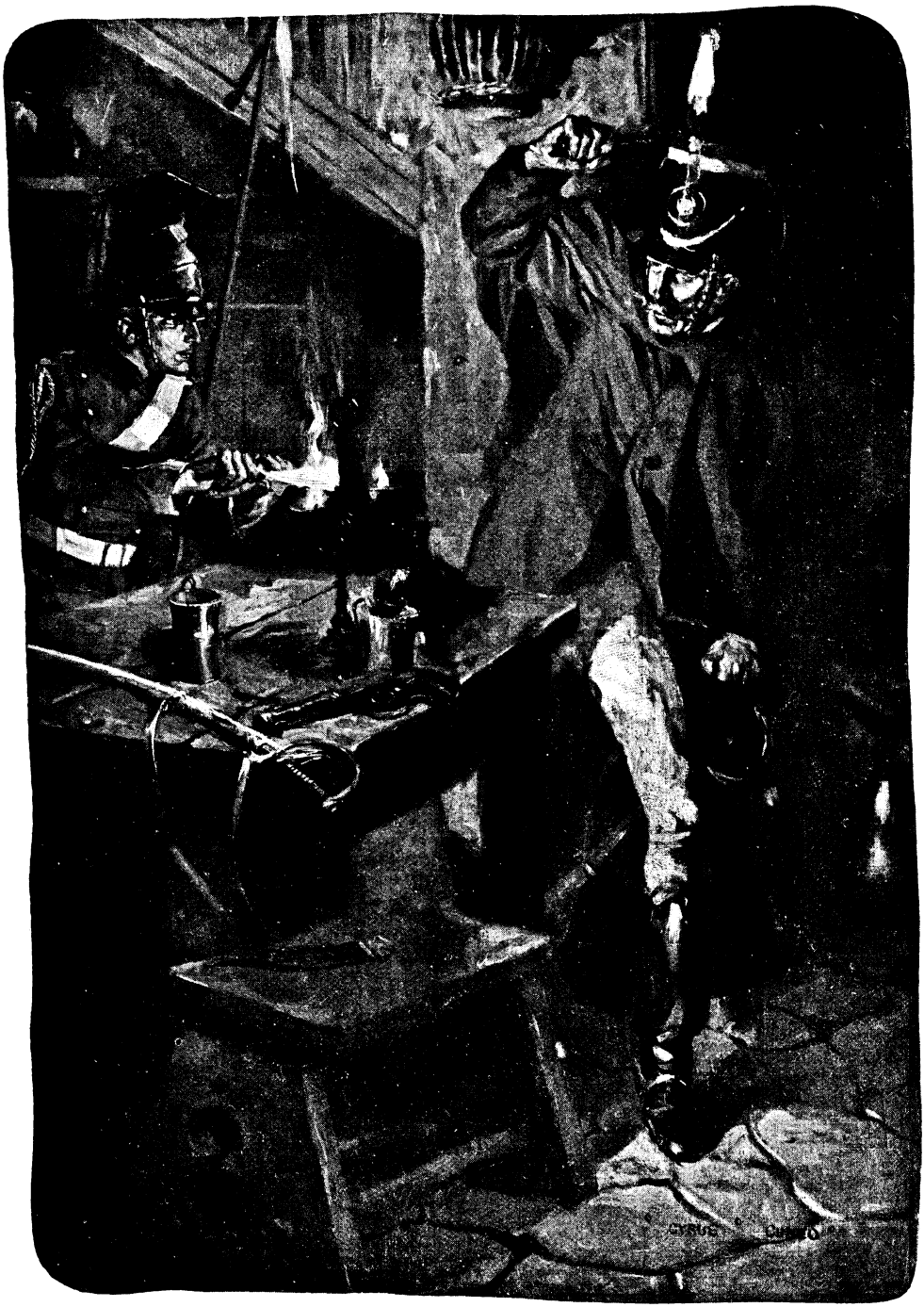

"Without a second's delay I dashed the lamp over."

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was forcing open his fingers, fumbled in the breast of his tunic. A moment later I felt a sharp sting in my left side. He had stabbed me; but, fortunately, the point of the knife caught in my sword-belt, and glancing off, gave me a mere flesh wound. I wrested the knife from him, and a moment later was in possession of the paper.

"Come!" I cried angrily, "I have had enough of this child's play. March! You came on horseback. I shall borrow your horse for my return."

Day was now breaking quickly. I forced the boy into the open and so to the stabling. My own brute was far too lame to admit of my riding him. To my surprise, however, I found another beast beside the boy's, as ill-conditioned and raw-boned a beast as any I have ever seen. This I took to be mine host's; and seeing that he had been none so civil, I took the liberty of borrowing it for the advantage of King George.

On it I placed the boy, while I myself rode the French brute. The boy bore himself very dejectedly.

"Come!" I cried, when we were gone four miles, "'tis the fortune of war. Don't be so overborne. In truth, you did handsomely."

"I would not have you come by that paper for all the wealth of the Indies."

"Blame not me, but your own luck," I laughed. "Gad! had your knife not happed upon my belt, I should have gone under."

"You are wounded?" the boy inquired.

"A scratch—sore enough, but of no consequence."

We rode steadily on. It seemed to me that the boy looked at me compassionately from time to time.

"You are in pain," he said once when I winced at the rubbing of my wound.

"A mere bagatelle," I answered. "We men of the —th Light Dragoons regard scratches as the merest trifles."

I began to take an interest in the lad. He was so young and so girlish that he seemed all out of place in the uniform of a lancer.

"You have not been in the service long?" I asked.

The boy stared at me.

"You are pleased to jest," he said.

The answer appeared to me exceedingly unintelligible. Possibly, I thought, the lad is boorish. Children cannot be expected to acquire the *sang-froid* of an experienced soldier.

With but few sentences we rode the rest of the way. Towards the set of sun I caught the glitter of the Douro shimmering on its way between the clinging hills.

"Now," cried I, "you shall see the greatest general of the day, for these papers of yours must go into his hands."

"Soult may be a great general," the boy answered, "but——"

"Soult!" I cried. "What have I to do with Soult? A thousand devils! 'Tis Sir Arthur Wellesley of whom I speak."

"Sir Arthur Wellesley!" the boy cried in a voice of amazement. Then he burst into a laugh. "Then—then you are not a French dragoon."

"By Mars, no! You saw at the hostel that I was no comrade of yours."

"Of mine?" Again the boy laughed merrily. "I am no Frenchman. I am a Spanish girl who has sought this disguise for safety, and the papers you hold are from the Spanish junta and for Sir Arthur Wellesley, your general. I am called Donna Isabella."

Thus it was that I brought home a Spanish woman as prisoner of war.

A ROSE-WRECK.

FAIR, on her heaving breast, with fragrance fraught,
Its gracile sails her zephyr breath once caught:
Poor craft! now derelict, dark, crushed, reft apart,—
Lost, even so nigh the harbour of her heart!

CHARLES INNISS BOWEN.

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"REVERIE."

FROM THE PICTURE BY CONRAD KIESEL.

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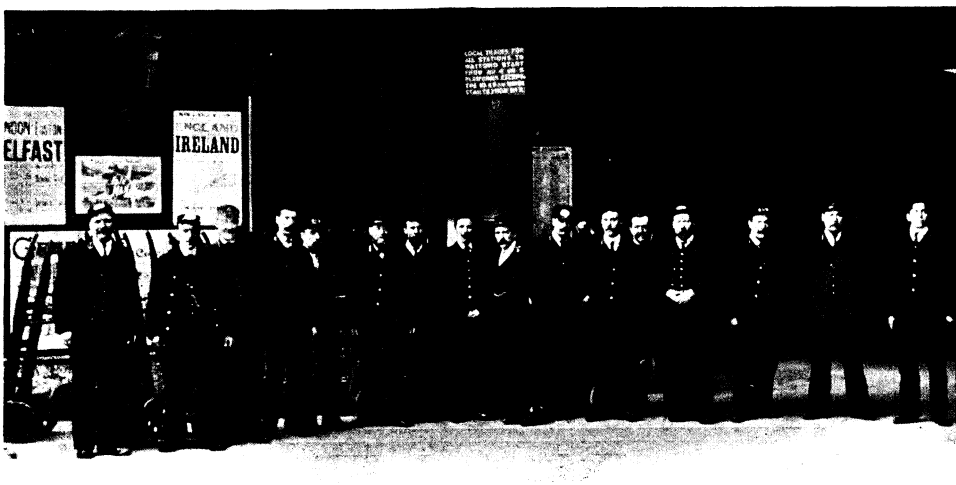

Photo by] [*P. G. Luck.*

A GROUP OF RAILWAY PORTERS AT EUSTON STATION, LONDON.

RAILWAY EMPLOYMENT.

By CHARLES H. GRINLING.

ACCORDING to the Census of 1901, the number of persons employed "on railways" is 320,514, but this total excludes platelayers, gangers, packers, and railway labourers. Moreover, as we have seen in previous articles of this series, the railway companies of the United Kingdom by no means confine their activities to the conveyance of passengers and goods by rail. They are also road-carriers, ship-owners, dock-owners, and harbour-masters, canal-owners, hotel-keepers, and general caterers, besides being manufacturers on a large scale of locomotives, carriages and wagons, signalling apparatus, and many other articles necessary for their business. The latest return made by the railway companies to the Board of Trade gave the total of persons employed by them as 575,834, classified as follows :—

Station-masters	8,103
Brakesmen	15,708
Permanent-way men	66,621
Gatekeepers	3,507
Engine-drivers	25,556
Porters	55,276
Shunters	10,841
Firemen	24,083
Inspectors	6,772
Passenger-guards	7,291
Signalmen	28,496
Labourers	53,282
Ticket-examiners	3,642
Mechanics	81,440
Other classes	185,216
	575,834

Taking 600,000 as the approximate total of the railway *employés* of the United Kingdom at the present date, it is probable that rather more than one-half—*i.e.*, about the number given in the Census return—constitute the managerial and operating staff of the lines. About 200,000, or one-third of the total, are engaged in connection with the maintenance and renewal of the permanent-way and rolling-stock, and the remaining 80,000 are employed in looking after the various side-shows carried on by our railway companies, such as hotels, refreshment-rooms, docks, steamships, canals, etc.

It will be seen that "mechanics" form the largest of the classes of railway *employés* separately enumerated in the above-quoted Board of Trade return. Generally speaking, every railway company in the United Kingdom has found it advantageous to have its own repair-shops for locomotives, carriages, and wagons; and when repairs have to be

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executed on a large scale, necessitating the provision of large and costly plant, it is economical to manufacture new rolling-stock as well. The bigger companies make practically all their own locomotives, carriages, and wagons. The smaller ones do so up to the capacity of plant primarily provided for repairs and renewals, contracting with outside works for the balance of their requirements. A number of the companies manufacture their own signal apparatus, including cabins, signals, and locking. At Crewe, for example, about forty sets of signals and 6,000 yards of point-rodding are turned out monthly. At the same place the London and North-Western has its own steel-works, capable of producing 50,000 tons of steel per annum, with "cogging" and rail-rolling mills, from which, after passing through a variety of processes, the ingots finally emerge in the form of 60-ft. rail sections, weighing 90 lb. per yard. Quantities of steel girders are also made at Crewe for warehouses, roofs, footbridges, etc.; and on one occasion, when a viaduct was washed away and had to be hurriedly replaced, no less than forty-two girders, each 32 ft. long, were made within seven days. All this is in addition to turning out about two hundred new locomotives per annum, and executing the necessary repairs to the stud of over 3,000 engines employed by the North-Western Company.

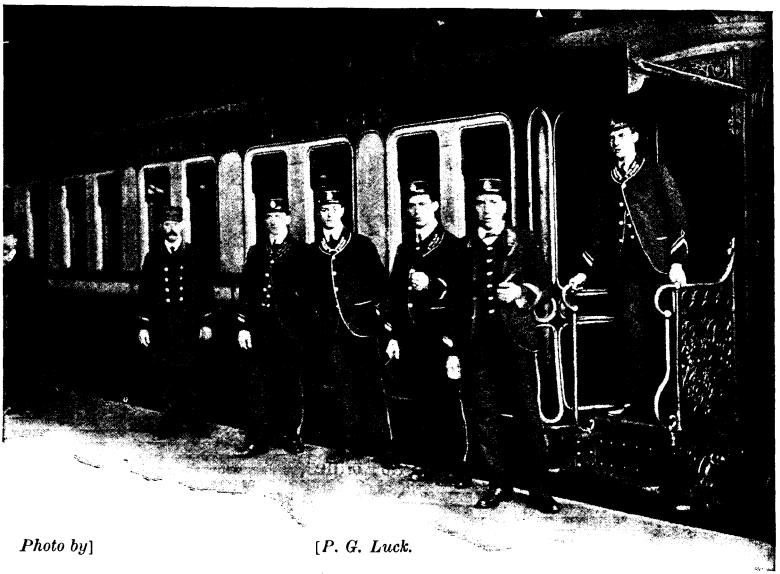

Photo by] [*P. G. Luck.*

TRAIN AND DINING-CAR ATTENDANTS, WEST COAST ROUTE TO SCOTLAND.

The question whether British railway companies do not go somewhat too far in manufacturing for their own requirements is one which is often debated. The most serious objection taken to the present system is that it is a handicap to "standardising," and consequently not so economical to the railway interest as a whole, as if a few very large firms, like the well-known Baldwin Locomotive Company of America, were to supply the wants of all the companies from plant laid down on the largest possible scale with a special view to the production of a number of generally acceptable types. On the other hand, it is obvious that the English system allows of a closer adaptation of the

Photo by] [*P. G. Luck.*

HOTEL PORTERS, L. AND N. W. R., EUSTON.

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locomotives and other machinery to the work which they have to do, as the rolling-stock of each company is designed and built under the direct personal supervision of the man who is responsible for its subsequent efficiency in working. Regarded from the workers' point of view, there are, as we shall see, substantial advantages accruing to the people employed, from the fact that they are directly the servants of the railway companies. On the other hand, it is somewhat of a handicap to locomotive-building as a national industry to have the bulk of the home trade carried on at private works, for this makes it increasingly difficult for British makers to hold their own with their American and German competitors in the foreign and Colonial markets, where the latter can, at times, "dump" the surplus of their much larger home production. In case, too, of a sudden "boom" in railway traffic, such as occurred a few years ago, it is perhaps more difficult for our railway companies to get their rolling-stock requirements promptly met under the present system, than if they always placed the majority of their orders with contractors.

Photo by] [*P. G. Luck.*

AN INSPECTOR, L. AND N. W. R.

As regards the construction of new railways, stations, etc., the employment of contractors is general throughout the United Kingdom, though occasionally small jobs are carried out by the companies' engineering departments with their own staff and plant. When the work is of any magnitude, the engineers on the staff of the companies have sufficient responsibility in regard to design and supervision, so that the employment of a contractor who provides "navvies," cranes, and other plant, makes both for efficiency and economy.

Photo by] [*P. G. Luck.*

A RAILWAY POLICEMAN, L. AND N. W. R.

There are at least 10,000 men regularly employed in the carrying out of railway construction in the United Kingdom, in addition to the 66,000 "permanent-way men" on the engineering staffs of the companies who look after the maintenance and renewal of the tracks.

It will be seen that railway employment embraces an immense variety of occupations. In its higher grades it demands the services of professional men of very varied training, whilst in the lower branches there is room for all degrees of skill in clerical and manual labour. I have before me a complete list of the various classes of *employés* in the service of the London and North-Western Railway Company, and I find that the number of different kinds of employment amounts to no less than 801. In the Traffic Department there are 135 classes, including such unexpected denominations as "book-carriers," "branders," "bullockmen," "chain-boys," "deliverers," "hookers-on," "iron-counters," "rope-shippers," "slippers," "tariffmen," and "winchmen." The Permanent Way Department employs 114 classes, amongst them being "asphalters," "french-polishers," "grainers," "holders-up," "rammermen," "saw-sharpeners," and "wallers." Then there are sixteen more sorts in the Permanent Way Stores Department, including "ballast-guards," "chair-

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gaugers," and "sawyers." The Canal Staff is another sub-department of the chief engineer, and its twenty-six classes of *employés* include "bank-rangers," "divers," "lock-attendants," and "water-agents." In the Electrical and Signal Department — which comes midway between the jurisdictions of the chief engineer and the locomotive superintendent — we find sixty-five kinds of men employed, amongst them being "chargemen," "strikers," "carboners," and "moulders." The Estate Department has fifteen denominations for its staff, of which "superintendent of labouring-class houses" would be difficult to understand, did one not know that railway companies have been called upon, in a number of instances, to provide model dwellings for labouring people, whose former habitations have been removed to make way for new lines and stations.

The Locomotive Department, which includes the Plant Works, is the largest employer of labour of all the sections into which railway service is divided. In the case of the London and North-Western, the staff of this department includes no less than 21,317 persons. There is, first of all, the Locomotive Works Department, which gives employment to fifty-eight classes of people, including mechanics of all kinds. Then there is the Running Department, including, besides the engine-drivers and firemen, over seventy other denominations of *employés*, amongst which "fire-carriers" and "fire-droppers" may be mentioned as illustrating the demand in the railway service for various orders of talent. The outdoor section of the Locomotive Department employs thirty-six classes of men, ranging from "blacksmiths" to "well-sinkers," whilst the Gas section requires fifteen other kinds, amongst whom "gas-fitters" and "meter-inspectors" are naturally the most prominent. The Carriage as well as the Locomotive Department boasts a chemist and a photographer amongst the eighty classes of *employés* for which it finds service, and in the Wagon Department there are fifty-seven more denominations, including "scrap-pilers" and "wheel-glutters." The Marine Department naturally requires a staff ashore as well as a staff afloat, and there are forty-one classes of persons employed in the former, as against twenty-two in the latter. The General Stores and Sheeting Department contributes thirty-two classes to the total, and there are nine denominations on the roll of the Hotel Department, which requires a carpenter, an electrician, and a gardener, as well as a small army of domestic servants. Altogether, the London and North-Western Railway Company gives employment to no less than 82,835 persons, of which the following is a convenient general classification, although, as above shown, it does not take account of very many subdivisions :—

Photo by [*P. G. Luck.*

A TICKET-EXAMINER, L. AND N. W. R.

Photo by [*P. G. Luck.*

A PASSENGER-GUARD, L. AND N. W. R.

Occupation.	Number of Staff.
Principal officers	110
Brakesmen	2,139
Capstan-men	358
Capstan-lads	17
Carmen (adult)	3,657
Carmen (junior—*i.e.*, van-guards, etc.)	1,315

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Occupation.	Number of Staff.
Carriage-cleaners (adult)	1,050
Carriage-cleaners (junior)	54
Carriage- and wagon-examiners	368
Checkers (adult)	1,875
Checkers (junior)	45
Checkers, chain-boys, and slippers (adult)	20
Checkers, chain-boys, and slippers (junior)	51
Clerks (adult)	7,320

Photo by [*P. G. Luck.*

THE STATION-MASTER, EUSTON, L. AND N. W. R.

Occupation.	Number of Staff.
Clerks (junior)	1,953
Engine-cleaners (adult)	2,448
Engine-cleaners (junior)	533
Engine-drivers	4,085
Firemen	2,868
Gatekeepers	249
Greasers (adult)	97
Greasers (junior)	30
Guards (passenger)	629
Horsedrivers (shunting)	180
Inspectors (permanent-way)	68
Inspectors (others)	554
Labourers (adult)	9,290
Labourers (junior)	548
Lampmen	201
Lamp-lads	8
Loaders and Sheeters	673
Mechanics (adult)	10,948
Mechanics (junior)	2,138
Messengers (adult)	110
Messengers (junior)	495
Number-takers (adult)	42
Number-takers (junior)	95
Permanent-way-men	7,276
Pointsmen (ground)	18
Policemen	103
Porters (adult)	6,151
Porters (junior)	1,135
Shunters	1,348
Signal-fitters and telegraph-wiremen	115
Signalmen	3,025
Signal-box-lads	67
Station-masters and goods-agents	877
Ticket-collectors and examiners	265
Watchmen	72
Yardsmen	102
Foremen (permanent-way)	14
Foremen (others)	1,775
'Busdrivers	24
Point-cleaners	58
Stablemen and horsekeepers	327
Miscellaneous (adults)	3,067
Miscellaneous (junior)	395
	82,835

I may add that the number of female *employés* of the London and North-Western is 1,542, of which about 300 are clerks selected from daughters of company's servants.

The one general characteristic of railway employment, which is also its chief attraction, is its permanency. There are, it is true, a good many "supernumeraries" and "probationers" in the service; but when once placed upon the regular staff, a man, if he keeps steady and works with moderate efficiency, is usually retained until incapacitated by age, and in many grades he can reckon upon receiving a pension upon retirement. Even the men employed in the workshops are seldom discharged except for misconduct. The worst that befalls the railway mechanic who is on the regular staff is to be placed on "short time," and the men engaged in working the traffic and in the offices have not even this to fear. The difference in the staff requirements of busy and slack times is

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adjusted by engaging or discharging supernumeraries. The men whose names stand on the regular pay-rolls know practically nothing of what depression of trade means to the generality of those who work for wages; nor do the higher officials feel that sense of insecurity in bad times which furrows the brows of salaried servants in some other spheres of employment. For permanency, railway service in the United Kingdom is practically as good as the service of the Government. But railway companies, unlike Government departments, have dividends to earn, and little or no "slackness" is tolerated amongst the *employés*. Whilst the pay of the railway servant is secure, and the employment lasting, the work is hard and the hours not light.

Photo by] [*P. G. Luck.*

CORRIDOR-TRAIN ATTENDANT, L. AND N. W. R.

"The humblest railway servant, if he does not, like one of Napoleon's corporals, carry a marshal's baton in his knapsack, may at least contemplate a field of possible promotion of almost as wide a scope." This statement of the late Sir George Findlay in his book, "The Working and Management of an English Railway," has been exemplified in the careers of many leading British railwaymen. Two of our present railway chairmen, Sir Charles Scotter, of the London and South-Western, and Sir James Thompson, of the Caledonian, have risen from the ranks, as also did Mr. G. B. Wieland, the lately deceased chairman of the North British, and Mr. James Staats Forbes and Sir Edward Watkin, both of whom held several chairmanships at the zenith of their careers. Quite a number of general managers and other high officials have entered the service as lads in very humble capacities; and even the highest engineering posts have in former days been recruited from the lowest grades. But the tendency of the present day is to require a considerable amount of technical, as well as practical, knowledge from candidates for the leading positions in the various departments, and the avenues of promotion are not so free as they once were. Moreover, the number of high-salaried positions is proportionately very small. There are, for instance, only 110 principal officers employed by the London and North-Western Railway Company out of a total staff of nearly 83,000. Under such circumstances, whilst promotion to high rank and a big salary are possible to everyone who enters the railway service, they are, to say the least, improbable of attainment. For the vast majority railway employment means a steady and rather monotonous "grind," not at all magnificently remunerated; and not a few leave it to seek—but not always to find—their fortune in other spheres.

Undoubtedly one of the chief advantages of railway employment in the eyes of the higher grades of the staff is the certainty of a superannuation allowance on the attainment of sixty years of age, if retirement then becomes necessary. Each of the larger companies has its separate superannuation fund, under its own management, whilst the requirements of the officials of the smaller lines are met by the Railway Clearing House Superannuation Fund Corporation, which is open to the servants of any railway affiliated to the Clearing House, as well as to the clerks employed at that institution. The North-Western Superannuation Fund, which

Photo by] [*P. G. Luck.*

ASSISTANT STATION-MASTER, EUSTON, L. AND N. W. R.

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may be taken as typical of these institutions, has a membership of about 9,000, who contribute 2½ per cent. on their salaries, the company subscribing the same amount per member. All the salaried staff under twenty-eight years of age are obliged to become members, and their contributions are deducted monthly on the pay-sheets. After ten years' membership a subscriber becomes entitled to a retiring allowance equal to 22¾ per cent. of his average salary, and this increases with the length of his membership, until after forty-five years of contributing he becomes entitled to 109 per cent., which is the maximum. Thus, if a person joins the fund at fifteen years of age, he becomes eligible for the maximum retiring allowance at the age of sixty. Many railway companies make retirement on superannuation compulsory at the age of sixty-five, unless a special exemption is granted by the Board. In cases of incapacitation through breakdown of health, the benefits of superannuation are obtainable at an earlier age. In the event of the death of a member before superannuation, his representatives receive either the equivalent of half a year's average salary, calculated over the whole term of his contributions, or the sum of his own contributions and those of the company on his behalf, whichever be the greater. Any member retiring from the service of his own accord before superannuation, or whose engagement is terminated by the company from any cause other than fraud or dishonesty, receives back the whole of his contributions to the fund; but if he be dismissed for dishonesty, he may forfeit the whole. There is also a society for providing pensions for widows and orphans of members of the salaried staff.

For the benefit of the "wages staff," as distinct from the salaried servants, the London and North-Western Railway Company has a Provident and Pension Society and a Supplemental Pension Fund. Under the former, men become entitled to weekly pensions ranging from seven shillings to twelve shillings per week on retirement after the age of sixty-five, or after the age of sixty if disqualified for work, with half-pensions of three shillings and sixpence and five shillings per week if incapacitated under sixty after twenty years' service. Under the supplemental fund an additional pension of five shillings per week can be obtained. The society also provides allowance in case of disablement due to sickness or accident when not on duty; an allowance at death of a member from other causes than accident on duty; an allowance at death of a member's

Photo by] [*P. G. Luck.*

A GROUP OF OFFICERS, L. AND N. W. R.

This photograph was taken on the occasion of the departure from Euston of the delegates appointed by the company to attend the International Railway Congress at Washington, May, 1905.

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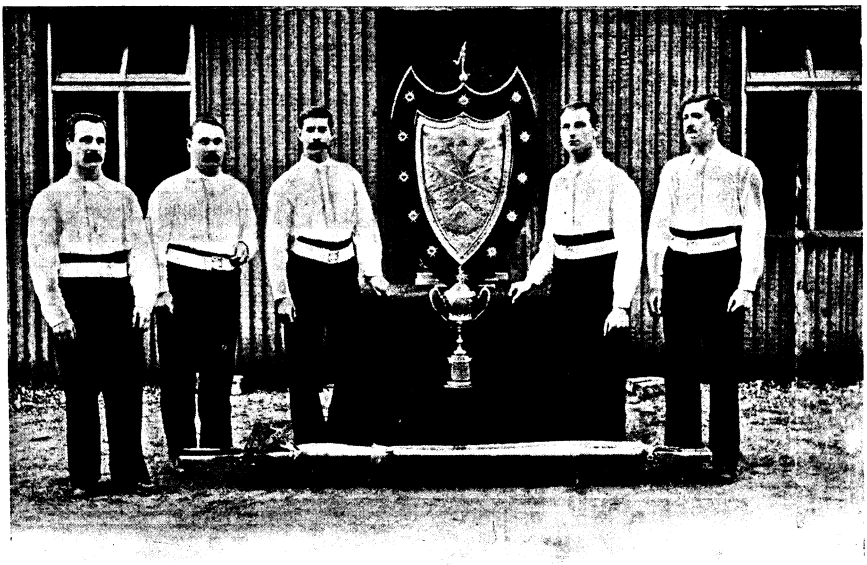

Photo by] AMBULANCE TEAM, MARCH (CAMBS.), G. E. R. *[Bertolle, March.*

Winners in 1903 *and* 1904 *of the Inter-Railway Challenge Shield competed for by teams representing the principal railways of the United Kingdom, and of the Challenge Cup presented by the Directors of the Great Eastern.*

wife ; and a retiring gratuity, which, however, is being merged in the pension scheme. For these benefits the member's contribution is sixpence or sevenpence per week. This company has also an Insurance Society, the object of which is to provide an allowance for the first two weeks of disablement arising from accidents incurred in discharge of duty, and other benefits supplemental to those obtainable under the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1897. Prior to the passing of this Act, the insurance society of the London and North-Western—and the similar institution connected with the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway—had a larger scope, and it may be remembered that many of the *employés* of these two companies wished to retain those societies as they were, and to "contract out" of the Act, but Parliament decided otherwise. The passing of the Act, it may be remarked, has largely increased the burdens upon railway companies' insurance and sick funds by encouraging "malingering," owing to the very generous allowances which accrue in cases of disablement. The London and North-Western has a separate pension fund for the foremen in its locomotive department. Several of the other companies are now taking steps to provide pension funds for the sections of their staffs who are in receipt of weekly wages, but, generally speaking, the security of a retiring allowance is limited to salaried servants—*i.e.*, the higher grade officials and clerks. The Great Eastern has lately established an Employees Sick and Orphan Society, the objects of which are to provide relief and medical attendance for members during sickness, and also payment of money on the death of a member or his wife, and to his orphan children under the age of fourteen years. In this connection, a reference should be made to the work of the Railway Benevolent Society, the object of which is to provide help in time of need for disabled railwaymen, and for the widows and orphans of those who fall in the service. This excellent institution fills up gaps in the provision made by the companies, who officially recognise its work and assist its operations in every possible way. Its offices, as I have already taken occasion to state in the course of these articles, are at 133, Seymour Street, Euston Square, London, N.W.

On account of the great variety of the duties which fall to the lot of railway *employés*, any standardised course of training for all who enter the service is, of course, out of the question. There is a choice of many doors of entry into railway work, and the nature of the apprenticeship served differs widely. In the workshops, the word apprenticeship is applicable in its usual meaning to the lads who learn to become skilled mechanics and craftsmen in the service of the companies ; and in this department every

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care is taken to give the aspirant opportunity for theoretical as well as practical education, attendance at classes at the nearest technical college being practically made compulsory upon lads working in the shops. In the traffic department, the training necessary to make a man a skilled workman has mainly to be picked up during the course of a steady progress through the various grades. It is scarcely necessary to say that engine-drivers are very carefully trained before being entrusted with the charge of a locomotive. They usually commence service as lads in the engine-sheds, where they are employed as cleaners; after a time they are promoted to be firemen; then to be drivers of goods trains; next to be drivers of slow or local passenger trains, and ultimately the most experienced and intelligent men are selected to drive the "crack" expresses.

The most scrupulous attention is paid to the training of signalmen, on account of the difficult and highly responsible nature of their employment. The period of probation differs according to the importance of the posts to which they are assigned, but no appointment of a man to the charge of a cabin is confirmed until the district superintendent has certified the candidate to possess every needful qualification, including freedom from colour-blindness, which is a fatal defect in an aspirant for promotion in the operating department of a railway. The guards of passenger trains are usually chosen from the ranks of porters, and the goods guards, or brakesmen, from amongst shunters, banksmen, and men of that class; but all these men are subjected to careful examination before their appointment to the trains, due regard being had not only to their knowledge and experience, but to their general intelligence, capacity, and character.

Every railway company has a manual of "Rules and Regulations to be observed by all persons in the Service," which takes the form of a handy volume of some hundreds of pages, carefully revised from time to time. A copy of this manual is supplied to every station-master, inspector, engine-driver, fireman, guard, brakesman, signalman, policeman, ganger, foreman, shunter, yardman, and gateman, and also to every clerk and porter connected with the working of the railway, and he is required to have it with him when on duty and produce it when required. He must also, of course, make himself thoroughly acquainted with the contents, as he is held responsible for compliance therewith, and in case of accident or other mishap, ignorance or neglect of any rule contained in the book entails serious consequences upon the servant at fault. It must be admitted, however, that the task of mastering the contents of the rule-book is not easy, as the regulations have necessarily to be framed to meet all conceivable combinations of circumstances. To meet this difficulty, the Great Western Railway Company has recently established classes at all important centres for the study of railway working arrangements, the rule-book being adopted as the text-book for the students, and the instructors being chosen from amongst the officials of the company who are best acquainted with the details of railway operation. At the termination of each course, an examination is held, and certificates are awarded to successful students. The equipment of the classes includes a model of a miniature double-line junction, with signal-box, signals, points, sidings, rolling-stock, and all other apparatus in full working order, and constructed in accordance with the company's latest standards, so that actual demonstrations can be given of the conditions provided for in the rule-book.

Candidates for railway clerkships have to undergo an entrance examination in writing, spelling, arithmetic, etc., the usual age for entering the service by this door being about fifteen—*i.e.*, immediately after leaving school. Of late years the problem of giving opportunities to railway clerks to acquire knowledge of the theory of railway management, in addition to what they can pick up daily in the offices, has received a good deal of attention. In London, lectures have been arranged in connection with the London School of Economics; in Manchester, under the auspices of the Faculty of Commerce of the Victoria University; and at Dublin, in connection with the Rathmines School of Commerce; whilst at Cardiff, York, and other centres, lecture and discussion societies have been formed amongst the clerks themselves, without affiliation to any teaching body. The directors of the various companies are doing all they can to encourage this healthy movement, the further development of which is very necessary if the avenue is to be kept open by which in the past many railway clerks have risen to high positions in the more technical and responsible grades of the service.

In addition to the various courses of training already mentioned, most railway *employés* who care to do so can obtain instruction in "first aid" and ambulance work at one or other of the numerous "centres" of the

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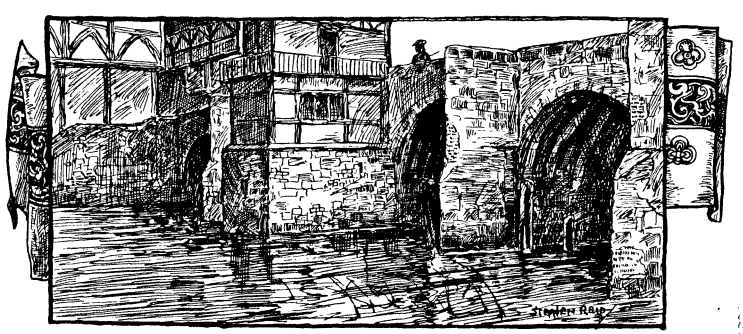
St. John Ambulance Association, which the directors of the companies have assisted that organisation to establish throughout the kingdom. The Great Eastern, for example, has no less than forty such centres on its system, and during 1904, 393 men presented themselves for examination for certificates of proficiency, of which number 360 satisfied the examiners. Competitions between ambulance teams representing various centres are organised by most of the companies, in conjunction with the Chapter of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, and every year an inter-railway competition is held, the first prize in which is a very handsome shield, presented by the King (when Prince of Wales) and the Chapter, in celebration of the longest reign in English history. Eight of these yearly contests have been held up to the time of writing, and on no less than four occasions the team representing the Great Eastern Railway has carried off the trophy.

In many cases, as is well known, railway servants are provided with their working clothes. The number of complete uniforms supplied by the London and North-Western Company in a year is about 15,000, which number does not include those grades which are only partially supplied with uniform clothing. The uniforms of railway policemen, it may be stated, do not imply any connection with the regular constabulary, and the wearers thereof have no jurisdiction off the premises of the companies they serve.

The payment of their wages to the *employés* of a great railway company is naturally a difficult business, necessitating great care and systematic checking. The principle most carefully observed is that the clerks who compile the wages bills and abstracts shall have no connection with the pay-clerks who handle the money. In some of the large workshops mechanical timekeepers are used, by means of which the men themselves, as they enter and leave the works, register the time for which they are entitled to be paid. The average amount paid weekly in wages over the North-Western system is about £87,000. The salaried staff of this company is paid monthly; of some others, fortnightly.

Whilst, as above stated, railway employment has the great attraction of permanency and security of pay, it also has, so far as the operating staff is concerned, a serious drawback—risk of accident. It is fair to the authorities to say, however, that more than half of the accidents which occur on railways are found by the Board of Trade inspecting officers to be due to want of common care and caution on the part of the sufferers therefrom. Nor is railway employment by any means the most dangerous occupation carried on amongst us. The percentage of fatal accidents amongst miners and quarrymen is considerably higher than amongst railway servants, and the risks incurred by seamen are estimated to be nearly nine times greater than those of railway *employés*.

In next month's WINDSOR I intend to deal with the social life of railway *employés*, with special reference to the "railway towns" which exist in connection with the great companies such as Crewe, Swindon, Horwich, Wolverton, and Eastleigh.



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"THE LAST LONG MILE THAT MAKES THE JOURNEY'S END." BY W. G. SIMMONDS.

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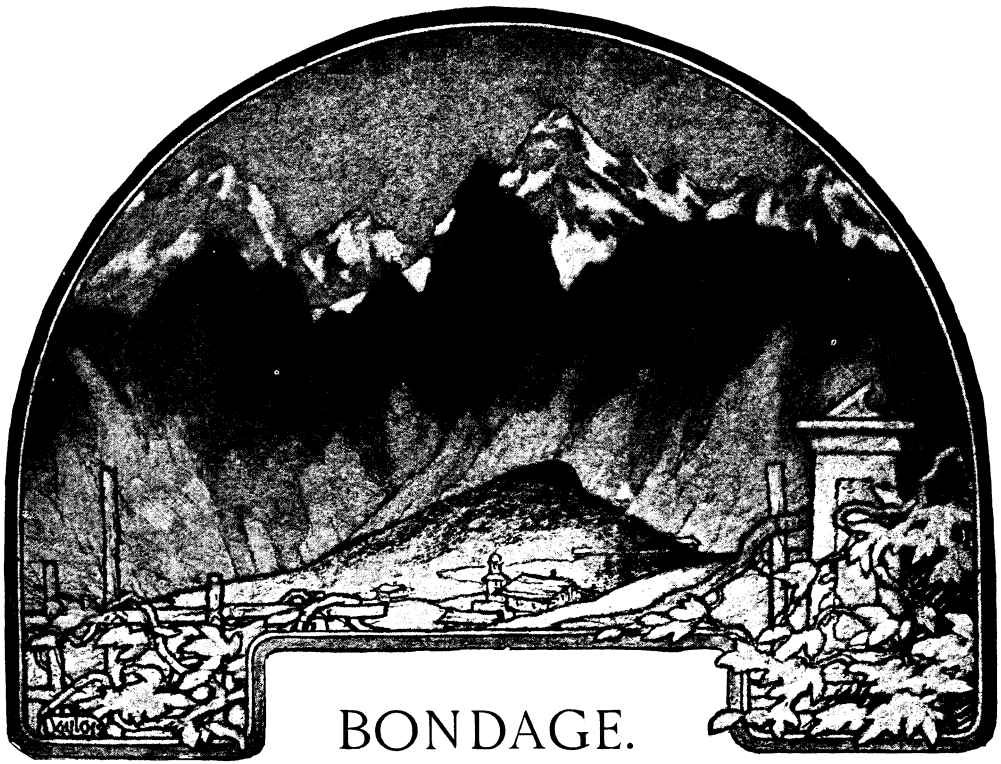

BONDAGE.

By JUSTUS MILES FORMAN.*

"BUT I don't want to marry you," said the girl. "I don't want to marry anyone—not for a long time, that is. Why should I? It's very stupid, I'm told, and one can't have a lot of other men about, for fear of scandal. Besides, it's all so horribly inexorable! One can't change one's mind about it, once it's done; one's life is so finally cut out and nailed down. No, I don't think I should like it."

"It is reasonably evident," said Mr. Paget, "that you have never been in love with anyone."

"No," said she, "I've never been in love with anyone — not really, that is. I've fancied a lot of people, and flirted with them and all, but—no, I've never loved anyone, I think. Oh!" she cried after a little, "if I ever should love anyone, he'd have to be a *man*, though, a real man! He'd have to be bigger than the people about him. He'd have to have done bigger things. He'd have to have a braver soul and a greater heart, and—and—oh! I've dreamed of him sometimes! I think he's living somewhere." She raised her head quickly, looking into Paget's eyes.

"Do I look the sort to marry a common man," she demanded—"an ordinary, nice, domestic, every-day man?"

"No," said Mr. Paget gently, and shook his head with a little sigh. "No," said he again; "you look the sort to marry a king."

But the girl left her chair by the fireplace and moved restlessly about the room, touching the books that lay on a little table near, and straightening the chairs in their places.

"Why should I marry you, of all people?" she said, with a certain resentment in her tone. "What are you that other men aren't? You tell a girl that you love her, that you love her more than anything else in the world; and if you are romantically inclined, you go down on one knee and tell her there's nothing in all the world you wouldn't do for her. But what would you really do? What would

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any of you properly brought-up men do? I tell you I'm *ennuyée* of 'this ghastly thin-faced time of ours.' There's no genuine devotion or chivalry left. Love is a decorously mild emotion nowadays. It's no longer a reckless passion. Once, when a man loved a girl, he tied a glove or ribbon of hers about his arm, and went out to do something fine, just by way of proving that he loved her as much as he said he did. Now he doesn't do anything but say it. He doesn't storm castles or kill brigands or win tournaments for the girl's sake; he sends her flowers and gives her cotillon favours. How is a girl going to know that he's telling the truth? He can't or won't prove it. How is she going to know?"

She turned towards him for an instant with a little laugh, a certain softening of the face.

"Ah! don't think I am trying to be nasty," said she; "don't think I'm silly and absurd, though perhaps I am. It's such a big thing, isn't it, this loving and marrying? It means all one's life, doesn't it? One must be very certain, I should think. I—like you—tremendously. You know that, don't you? Sometimes I think I could—marry you and be very happy. You've many of the things about you that the man I love must have. Perhaps you've them all. Once or twice I've thought so—but I don't know. How can I know? What would you do for me to prove that you've been telling the truth, that I'm dearest to you?"

"Anything," said young Mr. Paget simply. "Anything in the world." But the girl turned away from him with a little exclamation of impatience.

"'The sort to marry a king.'"

"Ah! that is what they all say," said she. "It's so easy and indefinite. 'Anything!'"

She went over to one of the long French windows and stood there with her fingers beating idly against the glass.

From the window at which she stood one saw the great semicircle of glaciers and snow-peaks from the Dent d'Argent on the left to the Drei Brüdern on the right. Just beyond the gardens of the little villa the yellow glacier stream that is called the Katz plunged down the valley towards the village, with its hotels and carved wood booths below, and across the Katz the meadows, green and dotted with *châlets*, rose swiftly to the snowfields that seemed almost to hang over one's head.

The valley was already in evening shadow, but the great peaks gleamed rose and saffron, blue and gold, from the hidden sun. Montparnasse, the Cima di Sant' Agata, the Kaiserhorn, the three-headed Brüdern; and, against their dazzling glory, black and sinister and evil, the Aiguille des Damnés, a mere spear-head of rock, rent and fissured and worn, so steep that only a little snow might cling to its flanks. It was shaped like the Matterhorn, but sharper, with less bulk, and it rose like a dark and slightly crooked finger from the great field of virgin snow above the Sant' Agata glacier.

A very long time ago, when Huss and his followers were rampant in the land, certain priests of the Roman Church, being hunted up the valley, and as far as the little village, lost heart and recanted. But afterwards, being overcome by horror for what they had done, and certain of eternal damnation, went quite mad and fled to the mountains, where, some

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weeks later, their bodies were found on the slopes of the spearhead of rock above the Sant' Agata glacier. Wherefore the evil-looking peak took its name, Aiguille des Damnés, and was for ever reported haunted. Even to-day it is impossible to find a guide in the valley who will venture the ascent of the Needle. Once a party of Englishmen, climbing with two strange guides from Zermatt, fell, some distance from the top, and were duly buried. Again, a certain *Altesse* from Vienna met the same prompt end. But a Frenchman, climbing with but one imported guide, was said to have planted a small French banner in a cleft at the summit. The tricolour was seen, through glasses, by the party which found the remains of the Frenchman and his guide some distance above the glacier. They had fallen something over a thousand feet on the descent.

The girl stood for a long time by the window, beating her finger-tips against the glass, and staring out at the pearly snows to the west; and young Paget watched her, and the great love that he bore her beat in his breast and swelled there, shaking him from head to foot with a mingled delight in her wonderful beauty, and utter wretchedness for that the wonderful beauty was as far out of his reach as the rainbow snows on Sant' Agata yonder.

She was very tall and of a sumptuous figure, for she was not a particularly young girl, quite three- or four-and-twenty. She had the dark type, with a great deal of black hair, and an olive skin that tanned in summer to golden tints, very lovely. And she had eyes of a green-brown, great even for her type, and changing strangely in colour with her mood—full of shadows. For a mouth like hers men have died. Further, she had a certain slow grace of movement, quite Southern, for her mother had been Italian—one of the Borromei.

Then, all at once, as she stood looking out at the snows and at the evil black finger drawn sharply against their whiteness, she broke into a scornful little laugh.

"Anything?" she asked, turning a bit towards the man.

"Anything," said young Mr. Paget gravely.

"Bring me the tricolour from the top of the Aiguille des Damnés," said the girl, with a certain sparkle of interest in her eyes.

Young Paget looked at her under lowered brows.

"Do you mean that?" said he, after a moment. "You'd actually send me up there—to the top of the Needle?"

"Did you mean 'anything'?" inquired the girl, still laughing gently, "or did you mean 'anything' with reservations?"

"Oh, I meant it right enough!" said young Paget, nodding. "I'll go—or try to go, if you ask me to. It's believed to be certain death," he said presently. "No one has come down alive. You can't get a guide to try the climb for love or money."

"Ah!" said she. "A bit afraid?"

There was a short laugh from young Paget.

"No," said she, "not afraid, I expect; just discreet." But Mr. Paget looked her in the eyes so steadily that after a time she turned her gaze away and fell once more to staring out of the window and beating upon the glass with her finger-tips.

"I suppose you think it's all very mad," said she resentfully, "very mad and theatrical and reckless. I suppose you're thinking that I am like the woman in the poem, the woman who threw her glove down among the lions and dared her lover to fetch it. Well, maybe I am like her. Maybe I am mad and reckless. Do you think I want you to be killed, that I send you on such an errand? Ah! I don't, I don't! But if you're the right man, you won't be killed. It's a test of you, can't you see? If you're willing to risk your life for me, you're worth loving. If you're not willing, you're like all the other men of these times of ours, full of brave words, but craven inside. Ah, yes! I dare say I'm mad. Probably you'd best not go. Probably I'm not worth the risk."

Young Mr. Paget took a few steps towards the door. He was smiling a little, and his bearing seemed greatly to have changed. There was none of the surge and swell of love in him now, none of the signs of love on his face, only a certain quiet determination, a quiet confidence that somehow became him.

"I don't know," said he thoughtfully, "how long the thing should take me. I'm rather afraid I shan't be able to get even one guide, for they're all foolish about the Needle. If I have to go alone, it will be a bit more complicated. Still, I should say in about three days at the most, you shall have the tricolour, Miss Eliot, except in one event. Ah! now, I expect I must go and dress for dinner. Lady Billy hates to have us late."

But the girl came swiftly across the room to him and laid a hand upon his arm to

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check him. The arm shook a very little under her touch.

"You—you're really—going?" she said, in a wondering tone, and her eyes, very wide and dark, searched his face. "You're really—going up that peak? You're going to risk your—your life because I asked you to? Are you actually serious?"

Young Paget's eyebrows rose a trifle.

"Going?" said he coldly. "Going? I thought that was understood. Yes—oh, yes, I'm going."

But the girl seemed not to hear him. Her eyes still searched his face, very wide and shadowy, and her cheeks had flushed a bit.

"But you may be—you may never come back alive!" said she in her wondering half-whisper.

"That is most probable," said Mr. Paget composedly. "We shall be late for dinner if we don't look sharp."

The girl's hand dropped from his arm and her eyes from his eyes.

"You're—a very brave—man," said she under her breath. "I—didn't know—I didn't understand. You're a very brave—man," said she again. "If you are killed, I shall probably die, too. Somehow, I think you'll come back—with the tricolour. It seems more like you. I didn't—understand."

She turned slowly back to her window, not meeting his eyes again, and stared out at the paling snows and at the sinister, black finger crooked against them.

"You shall have the tricolour, Miss Eliot," said young Paget once more, and went very quietly out of the room.

But just outside the door, in the dim light of the hall, he ran into and nearly bowled over Miss Janet McCleod, who was one of his fellow-guests at the villa, a little Scots girl with jolly eyes and a jolly smile and an angel's voice, and withal one of the best mountain-climbers in Switzerland—a born climber, not made.

The girl seized Paget by the arm and dragged him into the light.

"I heard the last part of what you two were saying in there," said she. "I listened."

"That wasn't at all nice of you," said young Paget severely. "Not at all nice. I shall tell Lady Billy."

But the girl shook her head anxiously, looking up into his face, and held still to his arm.

"Never mind all that," said she. "That doesn't matter. I heard—*her* dare you to go up the Needle after that silly little flag, just to satisfy her silly little—no, it isn't little—vanity. So I listened. I knew what you'd do. You're going, aren't you? I heard you say so."

"Yes," said Paget; "oh, yes, I'm going, Janet."

"In spite of the danger?"

"Yes," said he, "in spite of the danger. I shall probably not come back."

The girl turned her face away very quickly, and her hand tightened, all at once, upon his arm.

"You—love her as—as much as—that?" she said presently, very low. But Mr. Paget made no answer, and she did not ask again.

Then, after a moment, she looked up once more, giving a little tug at his arm, as if she would recall his wandering attention.

"Listen!" she said swiftly. "That's settled, then. You're going to try to make that climb, and it will be hard work. I want you to let me help. Do you understand? I want to make the ascent with you."

"You—you want to make the ascent with me? *You!*" he cried, with a little, incredulous laugh. "You go up that peak, indeed! I should think not—let me go, child, I must dress for dinner."

"Wait," said the girl eagerly. "Just wait a bit. There's no hurry about dinner. Why shouldn't I go with you! I'm not such a bad climber, am I? I'm no novice, am I?"

"You're almost the best climber I ever knew," said he. "You're a born climber. But I tell you that peak is another matter. It's almost certain death. I shan't be able to find a guide, in the first place, and it's too dangerous, anyhow. Indeed, you shan't go." He peered down curiously into her face with puzzled eyes. "What do you want to go for?" he demanded. "Why should you risk your life—probably lose it? Where do you come into the thing, anyhow?"

But the girl shook her brown head and would not meet his eyes.

"Never mind why I want to go," said she. "Maybe I'd like to do something really difficult. Maybe I've a fancy to see if the peak is really uncanny. Maybe—oh, never mind why I want to go. No, of course I don't come into the thing. I know that well enough. Still—well, still, I'd like to help bring that tricolour down. Please let me go, Jack. I could help, really. We're both experts, and two experts are better than one. No one person can climb a difficult mountain. It's impossible."

"Well, one person is going to climb this one," said Paget stubbornly. "You shan't

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go, Janet. You're a dear, and I'd like to take you, but I won't let you throw away your life in any such casual fashion. You'll come to an end soon enough on the Lyskamm

"Where young Führer sat smoking his pipe and waiting."

or the Eiger, or some of those. You shan't go, and that's all there is of it."

"Oh, very well," said the girl. "Be nasty about it if you like. I shan't quarrel with you. Only—" said she, as young Paget started up the stairs—"try the younger Führer, Johann Führer, when you look for your guide. He's not so silly about the Needle as some of the others. He went half-way up once. And—well, I don't think the peak is half so difficult as they say. I think all the talk is just because the guides and the villagers are superstitious. I've looked at it from the *arête* at the base of the peak, and it seemed quite possible. Just remember that."

On the second day after this, very early in the morning—before it was light, indeed—young Paget came downstairs into the lower hall, pulling the coil of rope closer over his shoulders, and adjusting the ice-axe which hung at his belt. He had—thanks to Janet McCleod's hint—at last found a guide, the young Führer, who made pretence of scorning the general superstition attached to the Needle. And he had planned, in a rough way, the route he meant to attempt from the Sant' Agata glacier to the summit of the peak. He calculated that the ascent from the glacier should take a matter of four hours, and the descent as long. To reach the glacier from the Katz valley, one climbed a wooded slope and a dry watercourse for an hour or more.

Someone was waiting in the shadows of the lower hall.

"Janet," said young Paget severely, "what are you doing in climbing things at this hour?"

"I'm going to make an ascent," said the girl, turning a sullen countenance.

"Well, if you think you're going with me," continued Mr. Paget, "you might as well go back to bed. I won't have you along."

"Then I'll follow," said she; "and you can't stop me. I'll follow and probably be killed. You'd best be sensible about it and take me along. You needn't talk any nonsense about my being in the way or hindering or anything, for I'm a better climber than you, and you know it. If I didn't think three people stood a better chance of making the summit than two, I'd stop at home. I want to help bring down that tricolour."

Mr. Paget said several things under his breath which the girl anxiously endeavoured to hear, but with poor success. Then they went out through the gardens of the villa and into the narrow street, where young Führer sat smoking his pipe and waiting. At the outer gate Paget turned for an instant to look back through the dim half-light, and a shutter in the upper part of the villa clicked.

It was five o'clock when the three reached

the top of the wooded slope above the valley and set foot upon the twisted glacier, and twenty minutes later when they put on the ropes and unslung their ice-axes at the base of the Aiguille des Damnés.

Now, there is an article among the laws of mountain climbing which says: If you become frightened or suffer a shock early in the day's climbing, go back to your hotel and read a book, for your nerve will be shaken for the whole day, and your confidence clean destroyed.

Young Führer, the guide, had, in spite of bravado, undertaken a thing which he knew no one of his fellows in the valley would have dared, and it is to be supposed that his nerves were rather keenly on edge, ill-prepared to withstand a shock. Half an hour above the glacier, during a bit of very nasty rock-climbing, he slipped and fell down a *cheminée* to the length of his rope. He was not hurt, merely bruised a little, but his nerve was quite gone, and at the end of another half-hour Paget unroped him and sent him back alone to the village.

"You'd best go with him, Janet," said Paget. "I'd rather go on alone."

But the girl set her teeth and dug her heels stubbornly into the tiny shelf where they stood.

"I won't go," she cried, "and that's all there is of it. It's no good your talking. If you go on up, I go with you."

"You're a trump!" said young Paget, with a certain sparkle in his eyes. "And a dear," he said an hour later, when she had very cleverly saved his life on a snow-saddle.

The girl sniffed.

"I could teach you a lot about climbing, anyhow," she said rudely.

The route which Paget had chosen for his attempt ascended the northern face of the peak. It followed a tortuous and irregular *couloir*, snow-filled, which zigzagged from base to summit. As matters turned out, it proved far the easiest route which could have been picked, for snow-climbing, which at its worst is but a matter of cutting steps, is practically as safe for two people roped together as for three, while the scaling of precipitous and overhanging rock is often downright impossible for less than three climbers. The snow in the great crevass was old and firm and, since it faced the north, unweakened by the sun. There were many steep slopes where steps must be cut, and not a few moments of imminent peril, but both Paget and the girl were experts and had solved in their time a score of harder problems. Indeed, as the girl had predicted, the peak was vastly overrated through its sinister history and the superstition of the villagers.

They halted for an hour, towards noon, on a little snow-plateau sheltered from the wind by a buttress of rock, and they ate the food which Paget had brought in his knapsack, and drank, each, a little brandy from his flask.

Above them the peak soared black and smooth and free from snow to its crest. It should be less than an hour's work, but terribly difficult, since there were but straggling crevices for a finger-hold, and scattered bosses of rock for one's foot. The wind, as always on a mountain-top, tore past in a silent, fierce gale, bitter cold and unceasing.

Young Paget unfastened the rope from the girl's waist and wrapped it carefully about him.

"Here I go alone, Janet," said he. "You'll wait for me. Two can't climb that spear."

"Yes," she said, with a little sigh. "Yes, you go alone now. I can help no longer. Be careful, Jack. Oh, be careful! Don't forget the wind. Yes, I'll wait here in the shelter." She turned a little way from him, not meeting his eyes, but young Paget put out his two hands, red and rough and torn from the day's work, and took her face between them, looking down into it with his grave smile. And the face went red and white by turns.

"If it—comes, child," said he, "it must come now. I think I shall do the trick, but if not—— Nonsense! I shall do it. Oh, Janet, child, you're the bravest little girl that ever smiled—and the dearest! Do you know, I think I see a great lot of things differently up here. One does on a mountain-top. Perhaps I've been a fool, Janet—I wonder—— Ah, yes! I see a lot of things differently."

"Do you?" she cried very low. "Ah! do you?" and the hands shook that she lifted to his arm.

Then all at once, before he realised what he was doing, young Paget bent forward, still holding her head between his two hands, and kissed her, and the girl broke from him with a little sobbing laugh and dropped down beside the sheltering rock, covering her face with her arms.

A moment later he began the final ascent, slow and careful, but ready with all his great strength for a moment's need, flattened against the rock, fingers searching ever for a safe hold, and foot following them.

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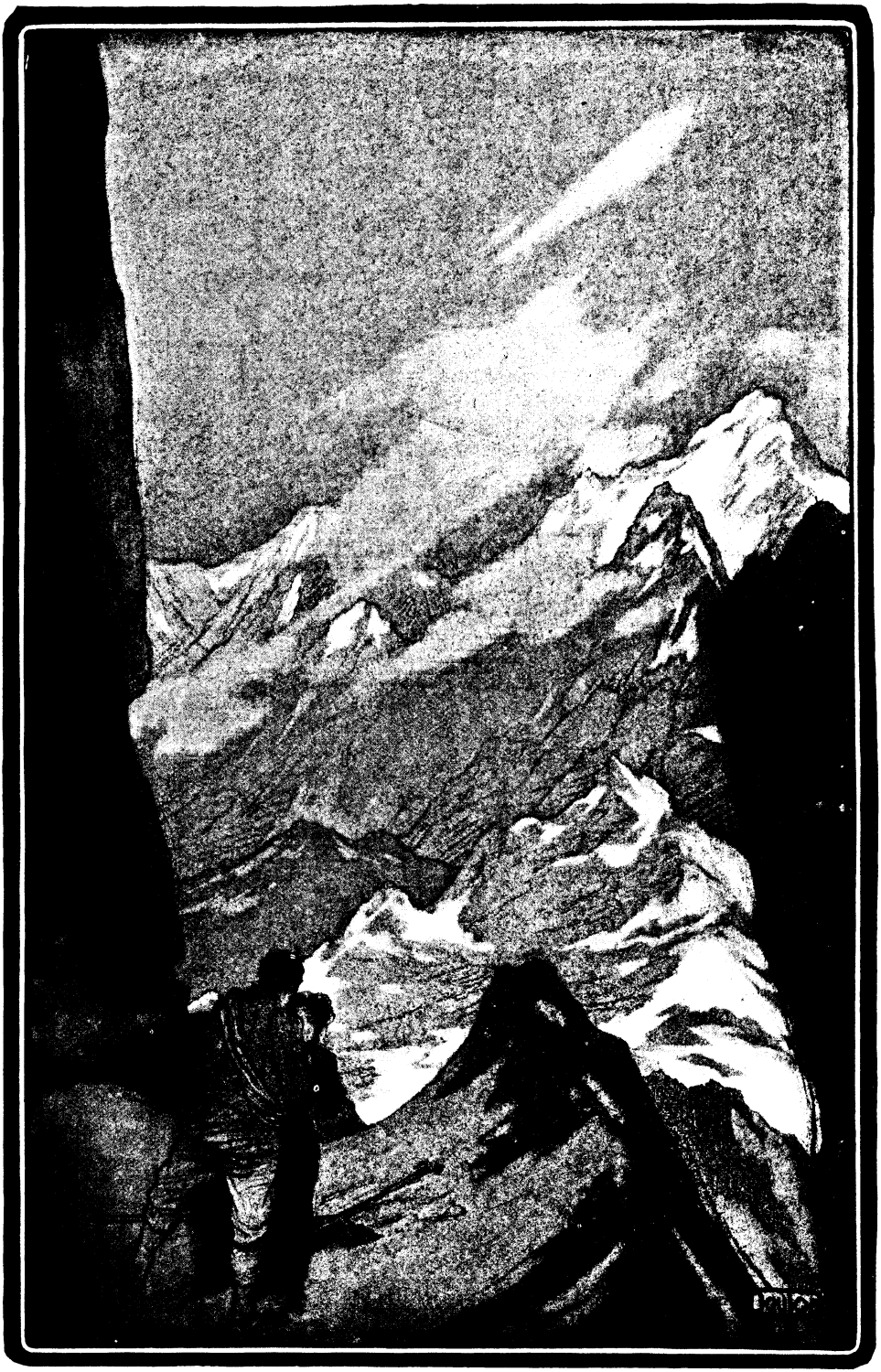

"'I think I see a great lot of things differently up here.'"

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And, after a little, the girl raised her head from her arms and crept a bit out from her shelter to watch. She made no sound—seemed scarcely to breathe—called out no advice for the wind to bear away—only watched.

But presently she hid her face again with a sudden, low, fierce cry, and something came slipping and scraping down the dark rock, twisting as it fell, and dropped heavily beside her in the snow.

For one awful moment every muscle in her body was paralysed, helpless, and her brain burned with fire, but in the next she was cool and ready and swift. Paget had left his knapsack beside the shelter. She tore it open with quick fingers and found the half-emptied flask. Then she turned the man upon his back—he had fallen on one side—and forced some of the spirit—nearly all of it—between his set teeth. Also she raised his head a little upon her knees and fell to chafing his brow and wrists. He was not much bruised, only his hands, somewhat, and one cheekbone where it had scraped against the rock in falling. The elbows of his jacket were a bit torn, and the knees of his breeches.

And after a few moments he began to stir, and his lips to move; and presently he sat up, winking and staring, for he had been only stunned, and not actually hurt at all.

"Thank God!" said the girl in a little shaking voice. "Oh, thank God! I thought—I thought you were—done for, Jack!" She pulled his head back upon her knees and rubbed it gently with a bit of snow, holding the snow against it so that he might feel the cold; and after a few moments he struggled to his feet, putting away her restraining hand, and walked about, stretching his bruised arms and stamping on the hard snow to make sure that he had taken no harm.

He laughed a little, turning towards her where she sat huddled against the rock shelter.

"Close call, that, child!" said he. And he frowned down at her, moving his head experimentally from side to side.

"Did you give me much of that cognac?" he demanded. "My head's all swimming—most scandalous!" He laughed again rather foolishly. Indeed he had had, during the hour, nearly the whole of a large flask of liqueur brandy.

"Now, then!" he cried. "Now for it again! This time I do the trick!"

The girl started up with a frightened cry.

"No, no," she begged. "Ah, no, Jack!

"He lay panting and breathless."

you—mustn't! You'll be killed! I won't let you go. Not again. For my sake, not again!"

But he pushed her rudely away and turned to the steep slope.

"Lemme 'lone!" said he. "Lemme 'lone! Wha'd'you mean by interferin'? 'S all right. Safe enough. Lemme 'lone!"

It never occurred to her that he was half drunk. She thought that the fall had made his head a bit queer. Indeed, it was doubtless half the fall and half the brandy.

She dropped back upon the snow, frightened at his fierce eyes, and crouched there once more, watching.

Then began the most wonderful feat of climbing that she had ever seen, probably one of the most wonderful that ever was accomplished. For the man seemed literally to crawl up the side of the wind-swept rock with an incredible swiftness, careless of hand and foot, rising where there appeared no hold at all.

Half-crazed men endowed with the sublime confidence of drunkenness have done marvellous acts of reckless daring, have gone where no sober human being would venture, and have come forth quite unharmed.

This is altogether natural, for a man at a certain stage of intoxication sees no danger; and once rid of the sense of peril, any of us could perform wonders.

It seemed to young Paget that mountain-climbing had all at once become most ridiculously easy—quite absurd. He fitted his fingers into the tiny crevices of the

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scarred rock and drew himself up to a foothold. If there was no crevice within reach, he leaped for one, and laughed at the accuracy with which it slid down to meet his hand. He had a strong desire to sing, but battled with it, for it seemed to him that singing would be a bit out of place.

He thought he might have been climbing about five minutes—in reality it was half an hour, when at last he pulled himself over an outwardly inclined ledge to a little sloping plateau, and knew that he was on the summit of the Aiguille des Damnés.

He lay panting and breathless for a few moments, sobered a trifle by his exertion, and then crawled across the summit, where the wind tore viciously by.

In one place the rock was broken and crumbled in a deep fissure, and a bit of snow had lodged there. Something red and blue gleamed under the snow, and Paget thrust down a hand with a choking cry. It was the Frenchman's banner, a little silken thing six inches by twelve, faded and stained and tattered by that ever-blowing wind, but clinging bravely to its tiny staff.

Young Paget thrust the thing into an inner pocket of his jacket. Then, after a moment, he pulled it out again.

"No," said he. "He was a brave man and a gallant climber, that Frenchman. It's his monument—sort of." He took his pocket-knife and cut off a narrow strip of the tattered silk—red, blue, and white. Then he fixed the little staff firmly in the crevice again, and put the strip away in his pocket.

At the edge of the summit he looked over and down. He could see the tiny plateau far below, 150 feet—200 possibly—and the girl huddled at one side of it. He could see the almost perpendicular face of rock up which he had climbed, but the brandy still swam in his brain, and the sight filled him with no terror. He started the descent with all his old buoyant confidence.

It was late in the afternoon, between five and six, when the two crossed the Sant' Agata glacier and reached the top of the wooded slope that hangs over the Katz valley. They sat down to rest for a few minutes, and young Paget unfastened the ropes and coiled them over his shoulder. The girl wearily laid her head back against the trunk of a tree and dropped her hands into her lap.

She raised her eyes from the valley, and they rested upon the man before her.

"Ah, well!" she said, "you've done it, Jack.

"And now you can keep your word, can't you? Now you can take the tricolour to—to *her*, and say: 'Here's the proof of how much I love you. Here's the proof that I've put my life into the deadliest peril to gratify your whim.' Then she'll be pleased, I expect, and you—why, you'll be very, very happy, won't you?"

Young Paget rose to his feet from the fallen tree and took the little strip of tattered silk from his inner pocket.

"A brave man set this flag up yonder," said he, "and a fool brought it down—a silly fool, a most pitiful fool; but he'll be a fool no longer. I'm going to tear this up, Janet. Do you hear? We've been on a climb to the Brüdern, do you understand? We've not been near the Aiguille des Damnés. We never seriously thought of it for a moment. I'm going to tear this thing up."

But the girl sprang to his side with a sudden cry and caught his arm.

"Tear it up?" she said. "No, no! ah, no! You're not going to tear it up. Do you know what you're going to do? You're going down to the villa, where—*she* is waiting, and you're going to throw that bit of silk at her feet, and say what you've just said—that a brave man put it on the Needle's summit, and a fool brought it down, but that the fool is going to be a fool no longer. That's all. That's what you're going to do and say. You'll have kept your word. You'll have proved that you weren't afraid, and you'll have shown her what you think of a woman who will wantonly put a man's life into peril to gratify her miserable vanity. Jack, Jack, if you had been killed!"

An hour later, Paget and Janet McCleod slipped into the villa unseen. A footman in the hall said that Miss Eliot was alone in the west drawing-room. Young Paget turned to the girl at his side.

"Will you come in with me, Janet?" said he. But the girl shook her head.

"I shall be waiting here for you," said she. "I won't go in."

Then young Paget, soiled and dishevelled and bruised and torn, opened the door of the west drawing-room and went in.

Miss Eliot was sitting alone in a big, stuffed chair before the fire. She did not see him at first, and turned with a little start as he closed the door behind him. But when she saw who he was, she rose very slowly from the big chair, and her face flushed all at once crimson, and paled again, and the hand that she raised to her breast shook uncontrollably.

Young Paget took a step forward with the bit of red and blue and white silk in his hand. He was ready with the little speech he meant to make; the words were on his tongue to tell her how he despised her for sending him to almost certain death, and how he despised himself for going; but somehow his tongue would not obey, and all he could say was, stammering—

"How ill you look! You—you must be—suffering. How very ill you look!" For the girl was deathly pale and very worn-looking. There were great circles under her eyes. She seemed even thinner, as though she had passed through a severe illness all in a day.

"I—didn't sleep," said she, "and I've had—certain things to worry about. Oh!" she cried fiercely, with her face in her hands, "I've nearly gone mad! You came here to throw that tricolour in my face, and to tell me how you despise me, didn't you? like the man in the poem! And you're right. I *am* despicable. I know it better than you do, better than you could tell me. I've been heartless all my life. I've loved power over men better than anything in the world, and I've used it without scruple. Why don't you throw what you have in your hand into my face, and go?"

But young Paget stepped forward a little and held out a bit of faded silk.

"Here is your tricolour," said he gently. "I brought it to you as I promised I would."

She shrank away from him, holding her hands to her breast, so that the silk fell upon the floor at her feet. Then very suddenly she stooped to it with a low cry and caught it up in her two hands and laid her face upon it, sobbing.

After a long time she raised her eyes again to his, very dark and shadowy and tragic.

"I've sent you nearly to your death," said she, "and you will despise me as long as you live; but now, when it is too late, I know that I love you more than anything in the world, and I shall never love anything else. Of course it's too late, I know that. You'd best go back to—*her*, to Janet McCleod," she said after a little. "She loves you. She'd make you happy. You'd best go back to her."

"Yes," said young Paget, "I fancy I'd best go back to her—but somehow, I can't. I'm afraid I love you too much," said he, "in spite of everything. I'm afraid I can't go."

THE THROSTLE.

DEAR Throstle on the birchen bough,
You sing each song twice over,—
"Blue violets now!"—"Blue violets now!"
"White clover!"—and "White clover!"
With silver flute you strive to show
The countless joys of May,
The tender notes come clear and slow,
With a Fa la la, and a Fa la la,
Like a sweet old roundelay.

O, well and well may you be blithe,
Your happy forecast flinging!
Between the sickle and the scythe
No space is left for singing.
When eager nestlings try their note
Amid the joys of May,
You needs must guide each little throat,
With a Fa la la, and a Fa la la,
Like a sweet old roundelay.

Dear Throstle on the birchen spray,
Brown singer kind and willing,
Your prophecies of yesterday
Have met with glad fulfilling.
For round your feet a thousandfold
Spring all the joys of May,
In rose and blue and green and gold,
To a Fa la la, and a Fa la la,
Like a sweet old roundelay.

MAY BYRON.

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THE UNANSWERABLE.

FATHER: But, my dear, you're too young to know what love is!
DAUGHTER: Indeed I'm not! I love him infinitely more than mamma could possibly have loved you when you were his age!

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

HER COLOUR.

I THINK I like you best
When dressed
In palest heliotrope;
That this is gracefully expressed
Indeed I hope.

I like you best, I think,
In pink,
Of softly blushing rose,
Or clouds that watch the sun to sink
As home he goes.

You're also charming quite
In white,
Or black, or red;
In fact, all colours suit you, day or night,
If truth be said.

But of them all, most true
Is blue,
The colour of the sea,
Or the still lake we watched, when you
Sat there with me.

So wear them all, but be,
For me,
Nor more nor less
Than just yourself, for this will ever be
Your fairest dress.

Charles Ffoulkes.

BOBBY (weeping): A dog come a-waggin' after me when I was comin' home.

PAPA: Why are you crying? Don't you know that when a dog waggles his tail, he always wants to play?

BOBBY: But this dog, papa, took hold of my trousers and waggled his head.

TEACHER: What is the meaning of the word "excavate"?

SCHOLAR: To hollow out.

TEACHER: Give me a sentence in which the word is properly used.

SECOND SCHOLAR: The small boy excavates when the teacher licks him.

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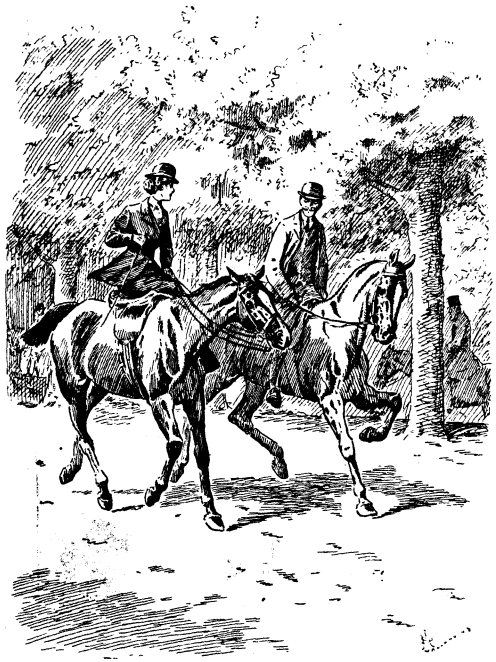

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

HE: Isn't your horse going rather lame?

SHE: Oh, he can't be lame; we have only just bought him!

HE: Ah! just a bad habit, then!

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

Two newspaper boys were reckoning up their earnings.

"Here!" said the first boy alarmedly. "This won't do! I'm a penny short."

"Well," remarked the other, cracking a nut, "what of that?"

"I most certainly am a penny short," declared the first boy, counting his coppers again.

"What on earth's the use of keeping on arguing?" demanded the other heatedly. "You don't think I've took it, do you?"

"I don't say you have took it, old man," said the first boy carefully. "I don't say you have took it. But there you are! I'm a penny short, and *you*, you know, you're a-eating nuts!"

MRS. VERE DE VERE: Why didn't you stop, sir, when you saw me wave my hand?

'BUS CONDUCTOR: I thought you were throwing me kisses, mum.

MISTRESS: Did you tell the lady that I was out?

SERVANT: Yes, ma'am.

MISTRESS: Did she have any doubts?

SERVANT: No, ma'am—she just said she knowed you wasn't.

A FISHY AFFAIR.

THE Whale, the Bat, the Pony,
One summer morn at three,
Held a conversazione
Beside the silver sea;
All the boxes being taken,
The Sardines took a *tin;*
The Prawns brought little pasty pots
To put the wee Shrimps in.

The Limpet played the kettledrum,
The Smelt sang songs of *Pan*
So feelingly that scalding tears
Adown the Crab's cheeks ran;
The Pony read "A Bridal Tale"
(He was too *hoarse* to sing);
The Whiting, a contortionist,
Made of himself a ring.

The Lobster (in his salad days),
His *entrée* made in state;
Selections from "A Winter's Tale"
Were given by the Skate.
It was a merry gathering,
And when at last it ceased,
A well-*bred* Sun was shining
In the bright and *flow'ry* (*y*)*east.*

Hazel Phillips Hanshew.

A MINOR CONSIDERATION.

"MY good man, you are wasting all your breath whistling—the engine's not on yet."

"That's noothin' ado wi' me. I've to blow the whistle at the right hoor; and if the engine's no' thare, that's the train's look-out."

NICE FOR THE NERVOUS TEMPERAMENT.

BIG SISTER (who has tried in vain every known means of pacifying squalling infant): There—there! Look at the gentleman making pretty pictures!

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NOT AN EVERYDAY AFFAIR.

A TRAVELLER was overtaken by night in a little village in Nebraska. He stayed at the local hotel In the morning he wanted to take a bath, and consulted the landlord about it.

The landlord shouted back to the kitchen: "Hey, Jim! this here gent wants to take a bath. Bring the fixin's."

Soon afterwards a boy appeared, carrying a cake of yellow soap, a towel, and a pickaxe.

"What's the pickaxe for?"

"Why," said the landlord, "you'll have to dam up the creek!"

"GOING to put him in the show?"

MAN WITH DOG: "Well, I'm not quite sure yet."

"Jest so—little doubtful yet whether to enter 'im as a dog or a rabbit!"

SHE: You know, my dear, I was obliged to get a new bathing suit. The last one was ruined in coming. I had it sent by post.

He: Humph! Well, from the size of it I presume this one came by telegraph.

THE UNUSUAL.

EDITH: My dressmaker—Madame Mantalini—must be losing all her trade

HELEN: Why?

EDITH: She sent my new dress home the day it was promised.

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"THE ROSE QUEEN."

By G. D. Leslie, R.A.

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"THE LILY-POND." BY G. D. LESLIE, R.A.

THE ART OF MR. G. D. LESLIE, R.A.

BY WILFRID MEYNELL.

"I CAME upon the picture early, and was so delighted with it that it made me like everything else I saw that morning. It is altogether exquisite in rendering some of the sweet qualities of English girlhood." So wrote Mr. Ruskin of the picture, "School Revisited," which represented Mr. George Dunlop Leslie, R.A., in the Royal Academy Exhibition of a year that is now some thirty years behind us. How one envied Mr. Leslie! How one envied the critic himself his overflowing wells of good-temper!—and envied, too, the painters of neighbouring pictures that profited by it beyond all reasonable covenanting.

Photo by [*Bassano.*

MR. G. D. LESLIE, R.A.

Looking at that group of gay and gentle schoolgirls in the garden, receiving the call of a lately married companion, whose woman-of-the-world toilet perhaps forces *them* also into the ranks of the unembittered envious, we can ratify Ruskin's tribute to the "easy and graceful composition." Of the youngest figure in all the young group he says: "The little thing on the extreme left, with the hoop, is as pleasant a shadow of Nature as can be conceived in this kind, and I have no words"—adds this Master of Words, "to say how pretty she is." Then he tells us, in his abounding way, that this picture, with three others, led to his own reappearance as a writer of those "Notes on the Royal Academy" he had discontinued fifteen years before under circumstances that are tolerably familiar. Finally he praises Mr. Leslie for his "English girls by an English painter," and he adds: "Whether you call them Madonnas, or Saints, or what not, it is the law of art life—your own people, as they live, are the only ones you can understand."

Thus did Ruskin, a critic, rich in intuitions, almost a diviner, reach right out to the point; and though the painter under review has put upon canvas other persons and scenes than girls and gardens, it is with these that we first and last and most admiringly associate him. First, with the "Hope"—a name of good augury—he painted in 1855, while still a student in the Royal Academy Life School, and exhibited at the British Institution—a picture which led his father, an artist of

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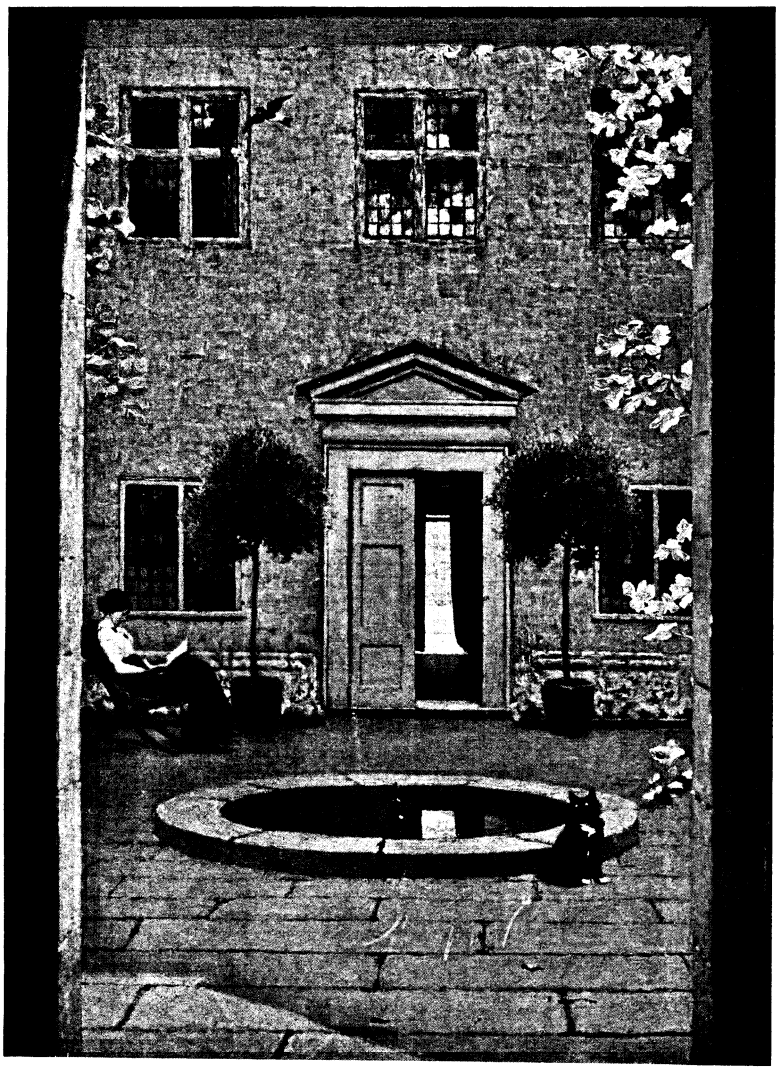
experience, to say to the young artist: "Well, at any rate, you need never starve, for you can paint a pretty face"; and which was, in fact, itself instantly bought by Lord Houghton. Last, with the "Thames-side Garden," which caught, with an almost surprised delight, many a visitor to the last Spring exhibition at Burlington House.



"THE COURTYARD AT COMPTON BEAUCHAMP." BY G. D. LESLIE, R.A.

George Dunlop Leslie was born in London in July, 1835; and there is an international interest in the fact that this painter of English and exclusively English girlhood was the descendant of several generations of Marylanders (name, again, of good omen), sprung from a Leslie who had settled there at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The grandfather of the painter of girlhood came from America to England in 1786, and, eight years later, his son was born in London. The return to America was made when that son, Charles Robert Leslie, the future father of George, was five years old. Educated in Philadelphia, and deciding on the career of an artist, Charles Robert Leslie recrossed the seas and presented himself in London to his compatriot, Benjamin West. He entered the Academy Schools, in which George was to follow him; found friends in Constable, Turner, and Charles Lamb, and a buyer in Lord Egremont, whose gallery at Petworth became in some sort his school. After working in England for over twenty years, he revisited his native land—a "pioneer" in this respect of Mr. Henry James, that creator of "pioneers"; but only to be confirmed in the opinion that London was his city of Destiny, whereto he therefore returned, practising his art with success, and passing away in 1859, after taking rank as one of the most popular of Royal Academicians.

At the time of his father's death, George Dunlop Leslie was beginning his career. He had sold the "Hope" four years before his father's death, and under circumstances that made for the father's confidence in his son's future. Though the son was at work at the Academy Schools, where his father

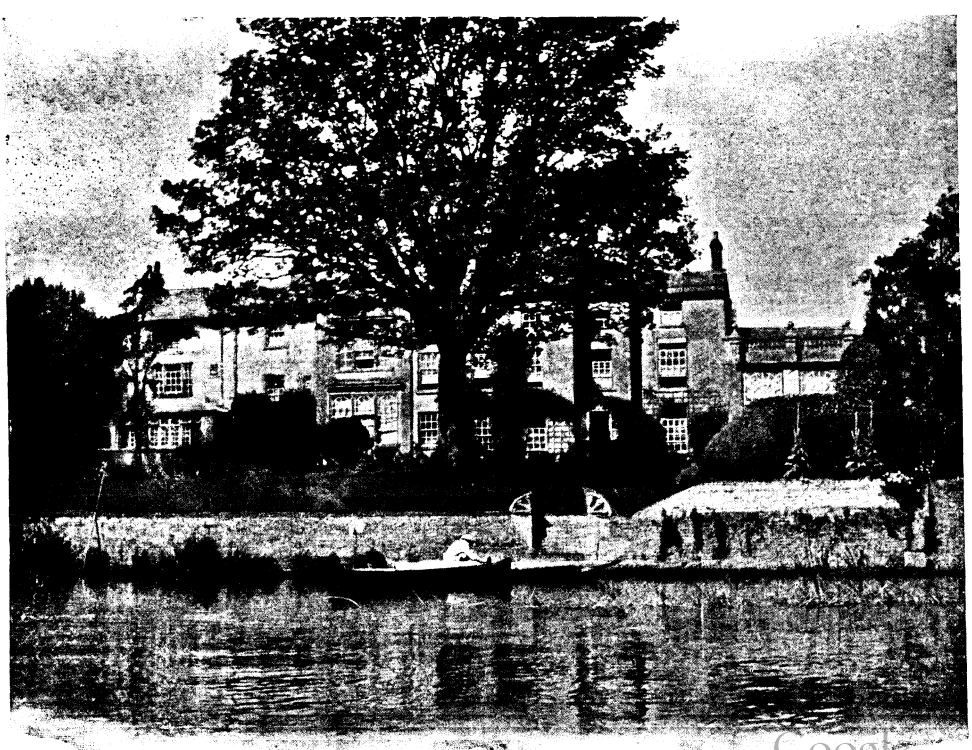
"THE LAST RAY." BY G. D. LESLIE, R.A.

From the picture now in the Auckland Public Gallery, New Zealand.

MR. G. D. LESLIE'S STUDIO AT "RIVERSIDE," WALLINGFORD.

caught, he painted the picture secretly and sent it off to the British Institution, in very much the same spirit, perhaps, as that which made Adelaide Anne Procter send her verses without a word, and under a pen-name only, to the magazine edited by her father's friend, Charles Dickens. That is not, as Dickens said, a sensitiveness very commonly found in the *genus* contributor. In young Leslie's case, it was, perhaps, supplemented by a suspicion that Leslie *père* would find the work a little too Pre-Raphaelite for his taste. Into the Schools one morning strolled Charles Landseer, who offered cordial congratulations to the student on the sale of his picture. "What picture?" asked the astonished father. Explanations followed; class was deserted; and the three hurried round to the British Institution—the father, one may suppose, the most proud and eager of the three.

Four years later, "The Reminiscences of the Ball" was ready to go to the Academy; but this time, as George Leslie well remembers, his father saw it before it went in. For that father then lay in mortal sickness; and the picture, so incongruous in subject,



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"RIVERSIDE," WALLINGFORD, THE HOME OF MR. G. D. LESLIE, R.A.: THE ARTIST HIMSELF IN THE BOAT.

"IN THE WIZARD'S GARDEN." BY G. D. LESLIE, R.A.

but so congruous in its talents to the dying father's aspirations and anxieties for his son's future, was brought to his bedside. His praises are not remembered; but Ruskin, himself the most attached of sons, no doubt imagined them when he saw the picture and wrote of it in his Academy "Notes" a sort of prelude to those praises of a later day we have already taken as a text. "It must be a great delight to Mr. Leslie to

see his son do such work as this. There is not a prettier little piece of painting upon the walls, and very few are half so pretty. All the accessories, too, are quaint and graceful, showing an enjoyment of elegance in form (even down to the design of the

"THE WISHING-WELL." BY G. D. LESLIE, R.A.
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frame of the picture and the bars of the chair) which is very rare among the young painters of the rising school. This grace of fancy is shown no less in the little Chinese subject by the same artist; which, however, is not quite so thoroughly painted. I shall look anxiously for Mr. Leslie's work next year, for he seems to have truly the power of composition; and that is the gift of gifts, if rightly used. He colours very well already." Alas! Ruskin did not write his "Notes" next year, nor for fifteen years to come. Then it was he wrote of "School Revisited" what has been already quoted, and more besides: "Mr. Leslie is in the very crisis of an artist's life. His earlier pictures were finer in colour, and colour is the soul of painting"—colour, you perceive, had become in the meantime the "gift of gifts," as you suspected it to be when you first heard the critic pay his supreme homage to composition.

Not in print only was Ruskin the encourager, if also the critic, of the young painter. The counsel of perfection given him—to paint only the people, and particularly the girls, he saw about him, dressed, too, in the fashion of the hour—he found hard to follow. His dear friend, Dora Greenwell, was at his elbow to suggest the grandmother period of dress, so that the mob-cap became his before it was Kate Greenaway's — witness "The Grassy Path," exhibited in 1865, and now possessed by Sir William Agnew. Then the classic came to compete with the homely. Ruskin's complaisance in presence of these opposing influences was agreeably expressed in a private letter which the painter still ranks among his treasures. "If you love classic subjects, you will do something good for somebody else—never mind what I say." The same letter wonders "whether there are any other nice Acade-

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"SCHOOL REVISITED." BY G. D. LESLIE, R.A.

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"POT-POURRI." BY G. D. LESLIE, R.A.

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micians besides Marks and you!" Another little sentence may be quoted from another letter. "Leave it to other people to find fault," had been Sir Edwin Landseer's injunction to Leslie one day when Leslie was mentioning something which might have been bettered in his own work. The phrase was quoted by Leslie to Ruskin, and that maker of many confessions gave answer: "I don't like that advice of Landseer's. It is a very ungenerous office" (that of criticism) "to leave to one's friends, and a much too agreeable one to leave to one's foes." Landseer, one may remark, had an ally in Stevenson's heroine who reproached Prince Otto with his willingness to bear reproof, and who carried the war into the enemy's camp. "Now, if anyone accuses me, get up and give it them" (in bad grammar, if not in bad language!) "Oh, I defend myself. I cannot take a fault at another person's hands—no, not if I had it on my forehead."

The new need for strenuous effort, once his father's prosperous studio was darkened, found young Leslie unflinching. "Matilda" and "Bethlehem" were exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1860; "Fast-day at the Convent" in 1861; "A Summer Song" in 1862; "The War Summons" in 1863; "The Flower and the Leaf" and "Say Ta!" in 1864; "The Defence of Lathom House" in 1865; "Clarissa" in 1866; "Willow, Willow," "The Country Cousins," and "Ten Minutes to Decide" in 1867; "Home News" in 1868, the year of his election as Associate; and "The Empty

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"AN ANCIENT HIGHWAY." BY G. D. LESLIE, R.A.
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"A COTSWOLD VILLAGE." BY G. D. LESLIE, R.A.
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"SEPTEMBER SUNSHINE." BY G. D. LESLIE, R.A.
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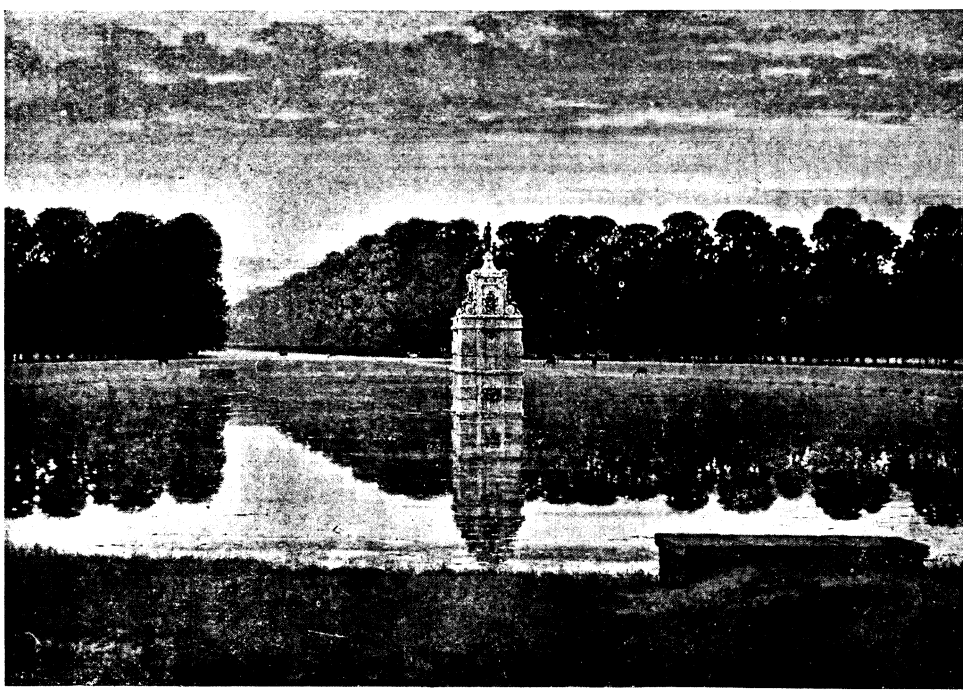
Sleeve" in 1869. At the Dudley Gallery also, during the 'sixties, was exhibited "The Rose Harvest," showing an English garden scene, a group of women in eighteenth century dress, and roses—red, white, and yellow—gathered into bowls of blue-and-white china.

The next decade began with "Cupid's Curse" and "Celia's Arbour," and went on with "Carry," and "Fortune," and "Nausicaa and her Maids," and "Lavinia"; with "Lucy and Puck," and "The Fountain," "The Nut-Brown Maid," "Five O'clock Tea," "The Path by the River," "On the Banks of the Thames," more "Roses," "Cowslips," "The Lass of Richmond Hill" (the artist's Diploma picture), "Home, Sweet Home," "Alice in Wonderland" (a portrait of the artist's wife and daughter), "Lavender," "Violet," "My Duty to My Neighbour," and that already named "School Revisited," which did more than *its* passive duty to its neighbours in gaining for them the good graces of John Ruskin. Perhaps the praise bestowed upon it was not without its influence on the next year's elections, which saw Mr. Leslie a full Academician.

"BARBARA." BY G. D. LESLIE, R.A.

The mere names provoke memories of domesticities dear to English hearts—memories of a sweetness that never palled with Keats's "too much sweet." The happiness of the painter's own household was an hereditary happiness; for the diary of his father, Charles Robert Leslie, has been described as the happiest ever given to the world. Art and love, the mother and the child, were there united in life as they have since been on the canvases of the boy who looked on at the serene living picture of his parents' conjugal affection, took it all in, and was himself one of those "babes" of his father's loving references in letters and diaries. "My father worked," says Mr. George Leslie, looking backward, "very steadily and cheerfully, keeping up a sort of

whistling at times. He had a pretty habit of going into the garden before breakfast and picking either a honeysuckle or a rose —his favourite flowers—and putting it in his painting-room. He always read a chapter in the Bible to us all afterwards, and then would commence to work. He did not object to the presence of any of his family in his room; but sometimes, when very busy, he would turn us out, especially the younger ones, whom he called 'trudies,' his corruption of intruders. He was never irritated by anything while at work, but seemed always calm and happy." That was the atmosphere in which George Leslie found his artistic being; and as he found it, so did he foster it under a later roof of his own.



"MIDSUMMER MORNING IN BUSHEY PARK." BY G. D. LESLIE, R.A.

The artist's picture in this year's Royal Academy. Reproduced by permission of W. H. Lever, Esq.

In the last quarter of a century the record of Mr. Leslie's brushwork makes the mere inventory of his pictures a longer one than can be accorded space. But these earlier works give the clue to all that was to follow for the next fifteen years, and then, when a change came, it was a change of topic rather than of manner. That is to say, he exhibited in 1895 his first landscape, "November Sunshine." It was succeeded by "September Sunshine" in 1896; and later years have seen him still a practitioner in that department—a department in which he has won the praise of artists, and that is what really counts with Mr. Leslie—the praise of his brothers. Yet, even so, he does not go out into the wilds. He is not far distant from that "Old Kensington" of which he was Miss Thackeray's chosen illustrator; he is within sound of nearer church-bells, even of the breakfast-bell. If the boat he paints be an empty one, it is only just emptied; and the bridge he sketches suggests, if it does not present, human traffic, a bridge that is symbolic of that linking of his own past and present as a painter—no revolutionary, but an evolutionary, whole. In this connection two names occur—those of Mason and Walker, who painted landscape always in relation to life. These two glories of the British school stood in the inner ranks of Mr. Leslie's friends; and his riverside house at Wallingford contains the best memorial of them in some of their own handiwork. Whatever may have been the acting and reacting influences of these two painters upon Mr. Leslie, he has observed them, and observed

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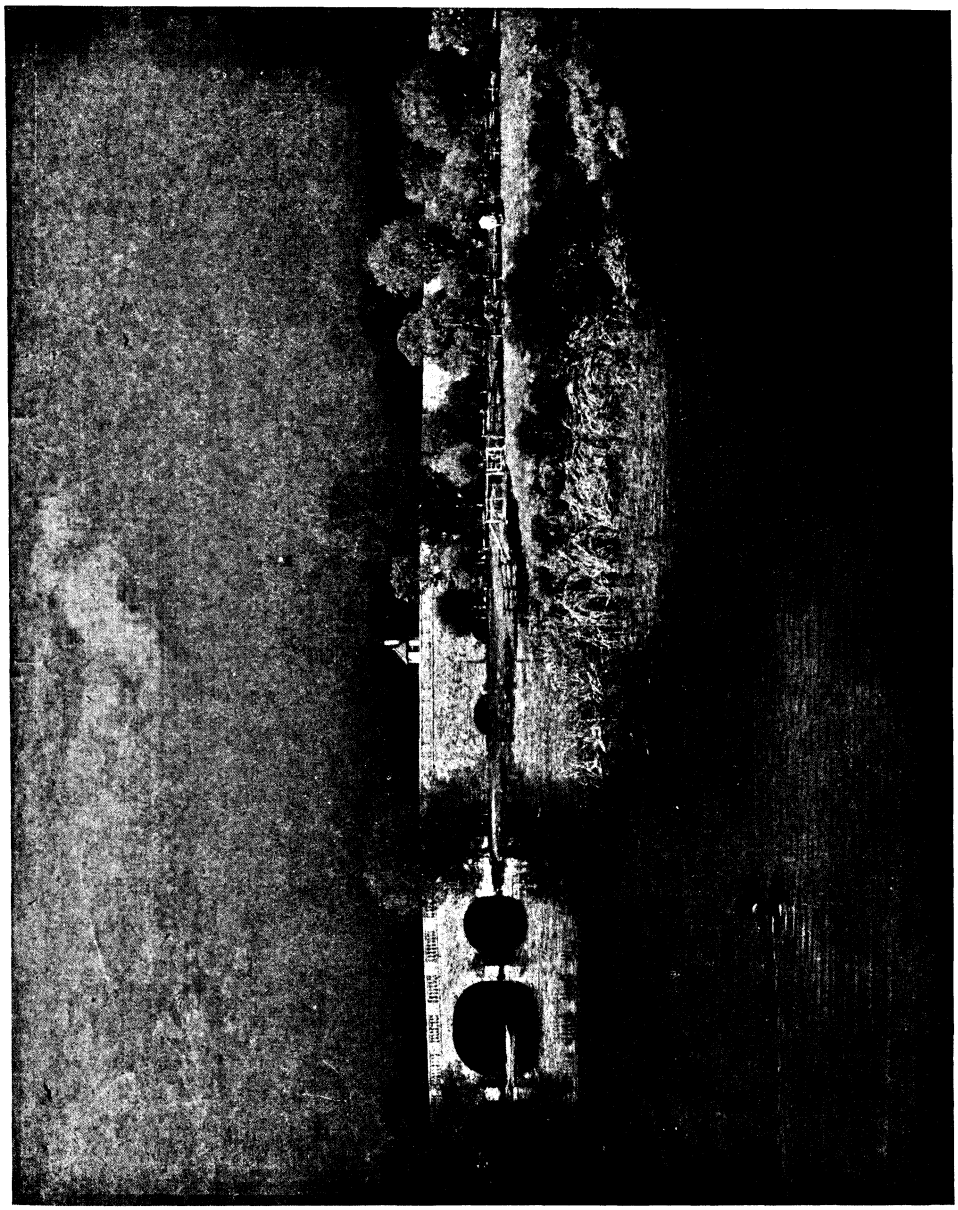
their greater predecessors, not copied them. Indeed, his studies have been confined to no period or place. They have been carried on in the schools of the great Masters of beauty of all times — from Raphael to Romney; while the chaste line of Flaxman, the innocent grace of Stothard, and the elegant artificiality of Watteau, have all had their share in influencing his taste.



"NOVEMBER SUNSHINE." BY G. D. LESLIE, R.A
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The approach to Mr. Leslie's house is itself happily composed. Old red brick walls, with suggestions of fruit-trees and flower-beds beyond, bound the road that leads to the spacious edifice, which is old in structure but new in so far as it has been partly rebuilt and enlarged by its present happy inhabitant. If Mr. Leslie's subjects are to be found anywhere in Nature, it is here, at his very door and in his very garden, that they must be sought. Very English is the

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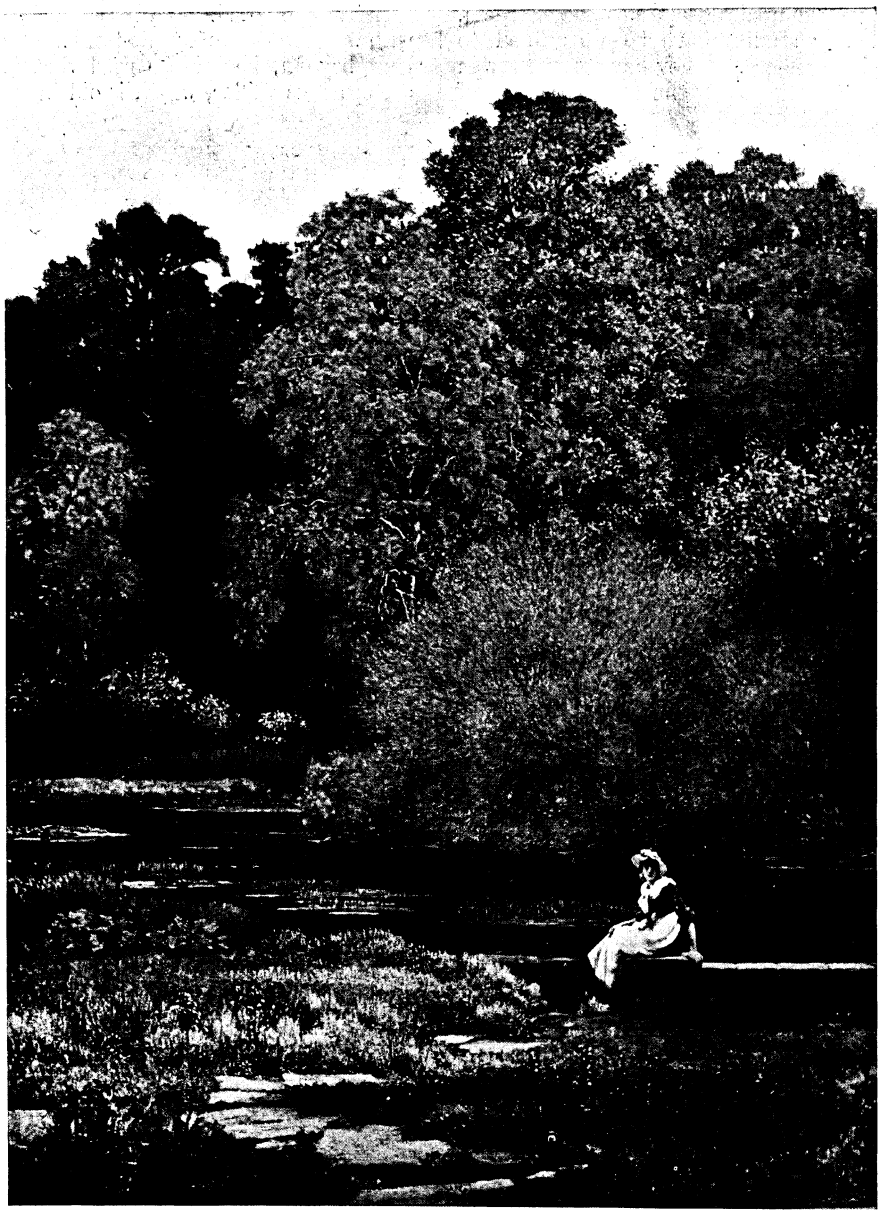

"THE ASH-GROVE." BY G. D. LESLIE, R.A.

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spirit of this abode of an English artist. Everything is in order; and though the painter would not, like Mr. Nevinson's pastor, request Pan not to tread on the grass, Nature herself has here learnt to be circumspect. She had tidied herself even where she might have gone about in tatters, her hair down. The very river seems to be curbed by the lines of the trim lawn. The flowers are predestined—shall we say foredoomed?—to vases, even vases upon the council-table of the Royal Academy, whither some actually went, as we gather from one of the letters in Mr. Leslie's interesting collection of autographs—a grateful letter from Leighton.

As he has painted, so has he written—delightful books of domesticity in field and garden, on the water and in the air—"Our

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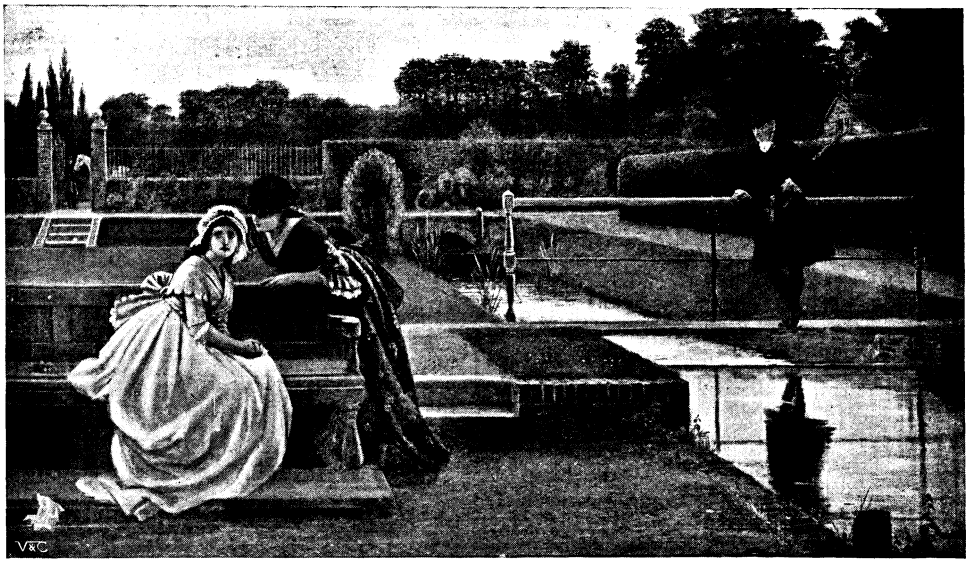

"TEN MINUTES TO DECIDE." BY G. D. LESLIE, R.A.

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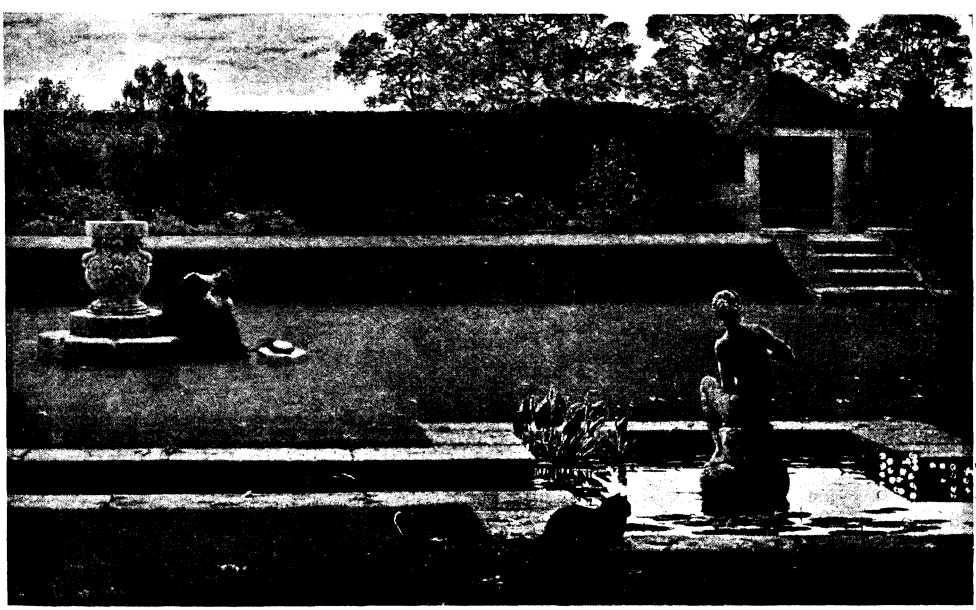
River," "Letters to Marco" (his old friend, Stacy Marks), and "Riverside Letters." The first of these was published in 1881, when he had been a year in his present home—a moving from London to the land which long preceded that turn towards landscape we have noted in his paint. The books are the books of a lover of ordered Nature. Mr. Leslie might have been lonely with Thoreau; his own environment, with the creatures who frequent it, has fitted him perfectly, as all readers of his agreeable natural-history gossip must know; has fitted him so exactly that one feels he has come round at last to the



"IN TIME OF WAR." BY G. D. LESLIE, R.A.

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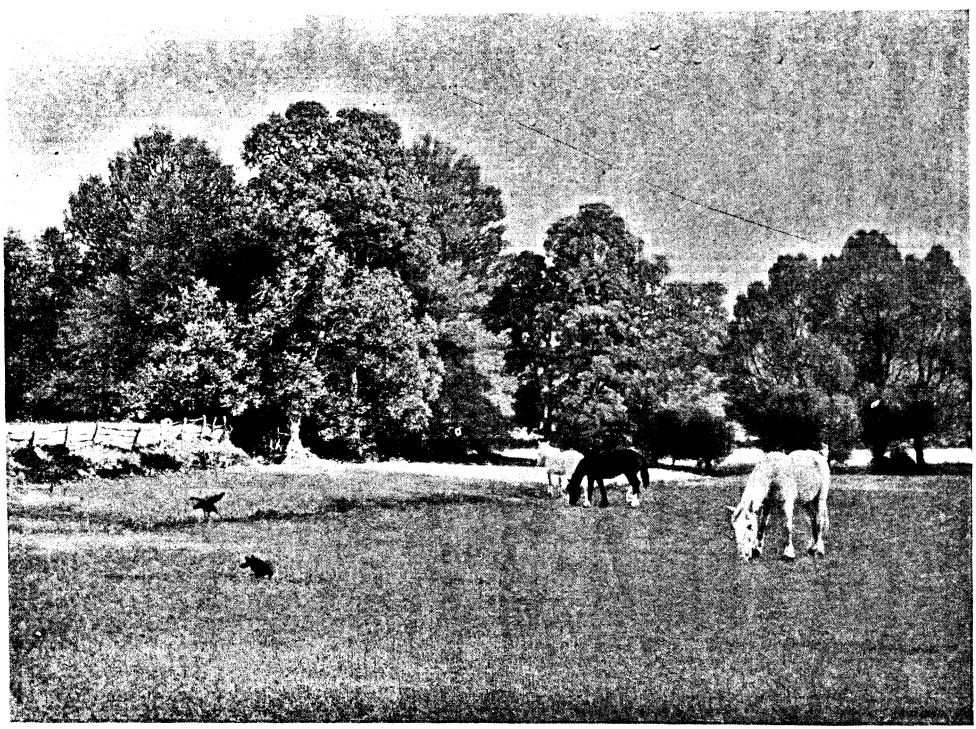
old injunction of Ruskin that he should paint the thing seen about him. "That is best which lieth nearest—shape from that thy work of art," is the verse's easy rendering of a truth that lies deep as the human heart. And the word of Ruskin, himself the obedient, sometimes the drifting, creature of circumstance, the child of the moment as well as the child of the ages, can fitly end, as it began, this record of the painter and the writer. It is an unpublished letter that he wrote after reading "Our River": "I have been pouncing delightedly on bits" [attacking] "new weirs and steam launches. I have been twice driven stark crazy about these things and the meaning of them—the boiler of me bursting on the brain for the time. But I get it soldered up nearly as new, and go on more cautiously . . . I should have liked to know how you were pleased with the woodcuts. Although the Thames does lie flat mostly, you might have given us a dump—or dumpling—of chalk here and there. And I must say that I like my swans white, and not French grey; and have seen resplendencies and glows sometimes from Richmond Hill which can't be quite given with Quaker tints of modern fashion. But you know . . . the best of Thames to me is a buttercup meadow with a clover one next it." "Very good taste, too; but you can't do that in woodcuts," says Mr. Leslie.



"THE DAY OF REST." BY G. D. LESLIE, R.A.

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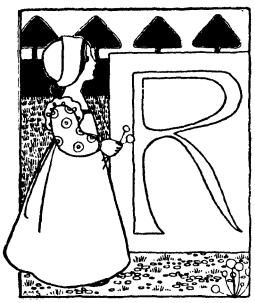
THE SPECULATIONS OF JACK STEELE.

By ROBERT BARR.*

II.—OUR DAILY BREAD.



OCKERVELT settled with Jack Steele by drawing his cheque for three hundred and ninety-eight thousand six hundred and seventy dollars, and it was the imperturbable Dunham himself who carried through the negotiations. Steele asked half a million at the beginning, but had made up his mind he would take three hundred and fifty thousand dollars. As he wished to have this sum clear, he added to it the amount he paid for the stock, including Miss Slocum's ten thousand dollars, and the percentage, which came to nearly forty thousand more. Then he informed Dunham he was forced to add ten thousand dollars for that kick, which he did. He told Dunham that he remembered the kick on an average of once a day, and that this thought humiliated him. Therefore he would be compelled to charge one hundred dollars a day for thinking of the assault while negotiations were pending. Whether this time-penalty hastened negotiations or not will never be known, but it accounts for the odd figures on the Rockervelt cheque.

The station-master of Slocum Junction was given the position of travelling man on the Wheat Belt Line, at a salary of fifty dollars a week, which seemed to him princely. Miss Dorothy Slocum insisted on finishing her year at the Bunkerville school, but during the Christmas holidays she married the station-master, and they set up housekeeping in Chicago with the nice little bank account of nearly fifty thousand dollars. The young lady's dream of life was now realised. She was an inhabitant of the western metropolis, in comfortable circumstances, with everything at her disposal that a large city had to offer her. Jack Steele, in the New Year, had the pleasure of escorting the young woman to a *matinée*, and when he asked her if the few weeks' experience of Chicago had changed her mind regarding the delights of the place, she replied that Chicago was heavenly; which called up a smile to the young man's lips as he remembered the story of a Chicago man who had died and gone to the other place, and told an inmate thereof that his new residence was preferable to Chicago. But Jack didn't tell the story to his companion. He complained pathetically that she had broken his heart by marrying the station-master, but she laughed and said she had broken his heart no more than Dunham had broken his neck by precipitating him down the railway embankment from the running train—which, by the way, was true enough.

As time went on, he saw less and less of his Bunkerville friends. He was rising rapidly in the financial world, had resigned his position on the Wheat Belt Line, important as it was, and had set up an office for himself. The newspapers made a great deal of his encounter with old Rockervelt and his victory over that magnate, but Jack was a clear-headed man who had no delusions on the score of that episode. He had spent some very anxious days while negotiations were pending, and no one knew better than he that if Rockervelt had decided to fight, it might have cost the great railway king more than he had paid, but Jack Steele would have been wiped out when the battle was ended. He resolved never again to combat a force so many thousand times stronger than himself. He would be content with a smaller game and less risk. Jack attributed the few grey hairs at his temple to those anxious days while Rockervelt was making up his mind, keeping silent and giving forth no sign.

But grey hairs do not necessarily bring wisdom, and so little does a man suspect what is ahead of him, that a few tears from a pretty woman sent him into a contest without knowing who his adversary was, to find himself at last face to face with the most

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formidable financial foe that the world could offer.

He had almost forgotten his friends from the west, when one day the young woman's card was brought up to him as he sat in his office, planning an aggression which was still further to augment his ever-increasing bank account. He looked up with a smile as Dorothy entered, but it was stricken from his lips when he saw how changed she was. All colour had left her cheeks, and her eyes were red as if with weeping.

"Good gracious!" he cried, springing to his feet, "what is the matter? Have you been ill?"

"No," she said, with a catch in her voice, sinking into the chair he offered, "but I am nearly distracted. Oh, Mr. Steele! you said once that the country was sweet and soothing after the turmoil of the city, and I told you I was tired of the country's dulness. It was a foolish, foolish remark. I wish we were back there, and done with this dreadful town!"

"Why, what has happened? Is it your husband, then, who is ill?"

"No—yes, he is—or, rather, yes and no; for, like myself, he is at his wits' end and doesn't know what to do; therefore I have come to seek your advice," and with this she broke down and wept.

Jack thought at first that her husband had been dismissed; and if that were the case, Steele, being no longer connected with the railway, would be powerless to aid. Still, he did not see why such an event should cause so much distress, for a young couple in good health, with fifty thousand dollars in the bank, are not exactly paupers, even in Chicago.

"My husband," sobbed the woman at last, "has invested everything we possess in wheat, and since that time the price of wheat has been falling steadily. Now we are on the verge of ruin."

"What on earth did he meddle with wheat for? It is more dangerous than dynamite."

"I don't know," wept the young woman; "but Tom thought it was sure to rise."

"Yes. They always think that. How much did he purchase?"

"One million bushels."

"Good gracious! Do you happen to know the price?"

"Yes, seventy-eight cents."

"Great Scott! Do you mean to say that you two silly young people took on an obligation of seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars, when you possess less than fifty thousand? When he made the deal, how much of a margin did he put up?"

"You mean the money he gave the broker? Ten thousand dollars."

"Ah! then a decline of a cent a bushel would wipe that out."

"Yes, it did, and ever since wheat has been falling, until now it is seventy-four and a quarter. We have given the brokers so far thirty-seven thousand five hundred dollars, and if wheat drops another cent, we have not the money to meet the call and will lose everything. These last three weeks have been the most anxious time of my life."

"I can well believe it. Now, what do you want me to do?"

"Mr. Steele, I want you to take over this wheat. It can't possibly go much lower, and Tom says it is bound to rise. This time last year it was eighty-nine, and if it went up to that now, we would net over a hundred thousand dollars. You see, you would not need to take the risk we have done, for we bought at seventy-eight, and you will be buying at seventy-four and a quarter."

"But I don't see how my taking it over would help you."

"Why, if it went up to over eighty—and Tom says it is sure to do that before many weeks are past—you would make a good profit and could give us back our money."

Serious as was the situation, Jack could scarcely refrain from a smile at such a beautiful specimen of feminine logic. Of course, if he wished to dabble in wheat, he could buy at seventy-four now, and if it went to eighty, secure the whole profit without paying anything to anyone.

"Is Tom at home just now?"

"Yes."

"Well, you ask him to call this afternoon, and we will talk the situation over."

The young woman rose and beamed on him through her tears.

"Oh, I am sure you two will hit upon a plan. When I told Tom this morning of the scheme I have just outlined to you, he scoffed at me; but you see its feasibilty, don't you?"

"Yes, I think I do. Anyhow, Tom and I will consult this afternoon about it, and he'll let you know at what decision we arrive."

He shook hands with his visitor and was very glad to see her depart.

"Good gracious!" he said to himself when the door was shut, "how fatuously silly she is! And to think that a little more than a year ago I proposed to her! Poor girl! Beauty almost gone, too, at the first whiff of trouble. Still, the situation is serious enough;

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"'You would make a good profit and could give us back our money.'"

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but it is easier to refuse a man than a woman. I'll tell Tom what I think of him when he comes. Imagine the cursed fool marching into Chicago like a hayseed from the backwoods, and losing fifty thousand dollars inside of three weeks! What he needs is a guardian; yet I'd like to help the little woman, too, although I don't see how I can. I wonder if wheat's going any lower. Hold up, Jack, my boy, don't get thinking about the price of wheat. That way madness lies. No, I'll confine myself to giving Tom a piece of my mind when I see him which will make him angry, so we'll quarrel, and then it'll be easy to refuse him."

At three o'clock the ex-station-master of Slocum Junction was shown into John Steele's private office. His face was so gaunt and haggard that for a moment Steele felt sorry for him; but business is business, and sympathy has no place in the wheat-pit. Tom shook hands and sat down without a word; all his old jauntiness had left him.

"Well, my Christian friend," began Steele in his severest manner, "when I was the means of getting you transferred from Slocum Junction to Chicago, and also had something to do towards endowing your wife-that-was-to-be with nearly fifty thousand dollars, hang me if I thought you would act the giddy farmer-come-to-town and blow it all away in the wheat-pit! God bless my soul! haven't you sense enough to know that the biggest men in Chicago have been crumpled up in the grain-market? How could *you* expect to win where the richest and shrewdest men in the city have failed? Don't you read the papers? Haven't you any brains in your head at all? Is it only an intellectual bluff that you are putting up before the public, pretending to be a man of sense? Why, a ten-year-old boy born in Chicago would know better! Wheat may be the staff of life when it leaves the flour-mill, but it's the cudgel of death in the speculative market!"

"So I've been told," said Tom quietly.

"Well, you haven't profited much by the telling. What in the name of all the saints made you speculate in wheat?"

"I didn't speculate."

"I understand you bought a million bushels?"

"I did."

"What's that but speculating, then?"

"Look here, Mr. Steele, are you quite done with your abuse of me? Isn't there some things more that you could say? That I wear a woollen shirt, and haven't any collar; that my trousers are turned up, and there's mud on my shoes? Do you see any straw out of the farmyard on my hair? If you do, why don't you mention it?"

Jack Steele laughed.

"Bravo, Tom!" he said; "that's quite your Slocum Junction manner. I supposed you were up a tree—that you had bought a million bushels of wheat, spent thirty thousand dollars odd upon margins, and that now you couldn't carry it any longer. Am I right?"

"Quite right. That's exactly the situation. Now, are you in the frame of mind to listen to the biggest thing that there is in America to-day! Are you in a financial position to take advantage of an opportunity that may not recur for years? If you are, I'll talk to you. If not, I'll bid you 'Good-bye,' and go to someone else."

"All right, Tom, I'm ready to listen, and willing to act if you can convince me."

"I can convince you quick enough; but are you able to act, as well as ready?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, Tom, if you mean going in for a big wheat speculation, I'm able, but not willing."

"I told you I wasn't speculating. Wheat will be over a dollar a bushel before three months are past."

"Is there going to be a war?"

"I don't know; but this I *do* know, that the wheat crop of the entire west is practically a failure—that is to say, late frosts this spring, and the wet weeks we have had since, will knock off anywhere from thirty to forty per cent. of the output. The Chicago wheat-pit is a pretty big thing, but it isn't the Almighty, neither is it the great and growing west. It can do many things, but it can't buck up against Nature. Wheat now, we'll say, is seventy-five cents a bushel, because of the belief that there's going to be an abundant crop; but if twenty-five per cent. of that crop fails, it means that twenty-five per cent. is going to be added to the present price of wheat. It means dollar wheat, that's what it means, and a man who knows this fact to-day can make unlimited millions of money if he's got the capital behind him. Of course, my mistake was in biting off more than I could chew. If I had gone in modestly, I could have carried it, and would have made a moderate profit; but I was too greedy, and too much afraid Chicago would learn the real state of the crops. I expected the news to be out long before now; but instead of that, the papers are blowing about full crops, which either shows that they don't know what they are talking about, or there's a nigger in the fence somewhere."

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"What makes you so very sure the crop's a partial failure?"

"Because it's my business to know, for one thing. I have travelled from Chicago clear through to the Pacific coast; south as far as wheat is grown; and up north into Canada. I don't need to ask a farmer what crop he expects; I can see with my own eyes. I was brought up on wheat; I ploughed the fields and sowed the grain, and I may say I was cradled in wheat, if you'll forgive a farmer's pun. Wheat? Why, I know all about wheat on the field, even if I don't recognise it in the Chicago pit. You see, my business is looking after freight, and the chief freight of our road is wheat. Therefore, wherever wheat grows, I must visit that spot, and I have done so. I give you my oath that wheat is bound to be a dollar a bushel before two months are past. It's under seventy-five cents now, and it doesn't take much figuring to show the possibilities of the situation. Three things are wanted: knowledge, courage, money. I have given you the knowledge: do you possess the other two requisites?"

"'Tom, that's pretty straight talk.'"

"Tom, I esteem you very much—more so now than when you came in; but, after all's said and done, I'd be simply banking on one man's word. Suppose I go in half a million dollars? You say that knowledge is the first requisite. Have I got that knowledge? I have not. I have merely your word that *you* have the knowledge."

"Yes, that's a good point to make," said Tom imperturbably. "You don't know me well enough to risk it. That's all right. Now, I see on your wall the big map of our road, which I suppose you have kept as a relic of your connection with the Wheat Belt Line. It's a lovely map, with the Wheat Belt Line in heavy black as the great thing, and the United States sort of hung around it as a background. There," continued Tom, waving his hand towards the huge map on the wall, "coloured yellow by Rand McNally and Co., are the wheat-producing districts of the United States and Canada. Now, I've been all over that yellow ground. I assert that in no part of it is the wheat crop normal. You pick out at random five or six spots in that yellow ground, and I'll tell you just what percentage of failure there'll be in those places you select. Then get on the train and visit them, question the farmers, and find out if they corroborate my statement. If they do, the chances are strong I am right about every other district."

Jack Steele got up and began pacing the floor, his hands thrust in his trousers pockets, his forehead wrinkled with a frown.

"Tom, that's pretty straight talk," he said at last. "I haven't been following the wheat-market—it's out of my line; but I dimly remember seeing in the papers not very long ago an estimate that we were going to have the most profitable wheat crop of recent years. Of course, that may be newspaper talk; but if recollection serves, it was backed up by telegrams from all over the west. How do you account for that?"

"I don't account for it. I am merely stating what I know. If the papers made

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such an estimate, they're wrong, that's all."

Steele stopped in his walk and touched an electric button on his desk. A young man appeared in response.

"Holmes," said Steele, "there was an account of the wheat crop all over the country in the papers the other day—occupied a page, I think. Go to the nearest newspaper office and get a copy. As you go out, tell Bronson to come in here."

When Bronson appeared, Steele said sharply: "Find out for me, from some reliable source, the lowest price of wheat for the last ten years."

In an amazingly short space of time Holmes reappeared with a newspaper a week old, and laid it on Mr. Steele's desk, and Bronson brought in an array of figures.

"Here we are!" cried Steele, jerking open the crackling sheet. "'Wonderful harvests ahead! Tremendous wheat crops!' Of course, it must be remembered that prophesying prosperity is always popular, and newspapers like that sort of news. Now, I shall select twenty-five places named in this paper. The useful Bronson will find out for me a reliable man in each place, and I will telegraph him. By to-morrow we should have replies from some fifteen or twenty of them; and if the majority say that the wheat crop is a failure, then I think we may rely on your forecast. Now, let us see what Bronson's figures are. Sixty-five, sixty-two and a half, sixty-four and an eighth, fifty-three and five-eighths, forty-eight and three-quarters—gee-Whillikins, that's getting down to bedrock!—fifty, fifty-four and nine-eighths, sixty-nine and one-eighth, eighty-five—ah! that's something like—seventy-four and a quarter, and so on. Why, it seems from this that no man is safe in buying for a rise if he pays more than half a dollar a bushel, while you come sailing in at seventy-eight! Septimus Severus! I admire your nerve, but not your judgment. Well, drop in to-morrow, about two, and we'll see what the telegrams bring us."

"Suppose, meanwhile, wheat falls another cent or two, what am I to do?"

"Oh, they can't hurt you to-day—it's after four o'clock; and to-morrow we'll see what is best to be done. It is useless to conceal from you the fact that there is an unholy gulf between seventy-eight, at which you bought, and fifty, to which wheat has on more than one occasion fallen. That means a little deficit of two hundred and eighty thousand dollars on your gentle flutter."

"The truth must come out soon, Mr. Steele, and it may be published any morning. When that happens, wheat will go up like a balloon."

"All right, Tom, I can say nothing further just now. To-morrow you will find me brimful of information, and quite decided as to the course I shall take."

With this the visitor had to be content. Next day he arrived at Steele's office in a more cheerful frame of mind. Wheat had closed the day before one-eighth stronger than it was in the morning. The conference this time was short, sharp, and decisive. Steele was thoroughly the man of business.

"I received seventeen replies," he said, "and they all corroborate your forecast. Now, what do you wish me to do with the little parcel of wheat standing against your name?"

"I thought that in return for the tip you might relieve me of three-quarters of it."

"I'll relieve you of all of it. I've given orders to my brokers to buy a pretty large slice of the wheat crop. This purchase may perhaps send up the price to the seventy-eight at which you purchased it. If it does, I'll sell out your lot and send you the money, which I advise you to invest in gilt-edged securities and leave wheat alone."

"All right," said Tom. "I know when I've had enough. Nevertheless, it's a sure thing, and I hate to let go."

"If it's a sure thing," said Steele, "I'll hand over to you a percentage of what I win, in return for the information you have given me. You go straight home and take this newspaper with you. Write out a report similar in length to these Press Alliance telegrams, giving name of locality and the actual state of the crop in each district. Let nobody know what you are doing, and work all night, if necessary, until the report is complete. Then bring it to me, and I'll have it typewritten in this office. Now, this is my busy day. Clear out. Good-bye."

Steele's buying took the market by surprise. No one knew, of course, who the purchaser was, but the price rose rapidly, point by point, until seventy-eight was again reached, and then Steele instantly gave orders for the sale of the million bushels that stood in Tom's name, for the double purpose of getting the man his money, and lowering the price so that his own purchases might be accomplished at a less figure than seventy-eight. The sale took place an hour before the closing of business, and turned out to be just in the

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"Who pays you for disseminating false news in the newspapers of this country?'"

nick of time. Orders to sell came in from somewhere — supposedly from New York, and wheat was offered in any quantity at practically any price the buyers liked to pay. Someone was hammering down the market. A fight was on between two unknowns, and pandemonium was let loose in Chicago. The pit went wild, and prices came down with a run. Steele had already stopped his buyers, and he stood from under. Closing prices for wheat were sixty-five three-eighths. Jack Steele did some deep thinking and close figuring that night. In spite of his purchases of the day, he had still a million dollars left to gamble with.

"My friend the bear," he said to himself, "is very likely to keep up his antics tomorrow, so as to frighten the opposition. If he squeezes down prices to sixty, I'll buy five million bushels. Every cent of a drop will mean a loss of fifty thousand dollars. It reached fifty in '94, and next year a cent and a quarter less, but this price has never on any other occasion been touched in the last forty years. Even if it drops to that, I'll have lost half a million or so, but I'll still hang on. I'm not trying to corner the market, so, Mr. Bruin, go ahead, and let us see what happens."

Next day the panic and the slump continued. Wheat fell to fifty-nine, and between that price and sixty-one, John Steele secured his five million bushels.

Who were the operators? That was what the papers wanted to know. Was it, as surmised, a contest between New York and Chicago? All the well-known dealers were interviewed, but each and every one insisted he was merely an interested spectator, holding an umbrella over his head. There was going to be a blizzard, so everybody had his eye on the cyclone-cellar. It was a good time to seek cover, they said.

Of course, Jack Steele might have rested on his oars. He was reasonably safe—in fact, he was perfectly safe if he merely held on, which was a good position to be in. But he had a plan of his own, although

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he resolved not to buy further unless wheat reached the low limit of half a dollar. In that case he feared he would plunge. This night, however, he proceeded to carry out his plan, which led to amazing results. He put Tom's report of the wheat crop's condition, now nicely typewritten, into his inside pocket, and locked up his office.

All the upper windows of a commodious business block were aglow with electric light. It was the home of the Press Alliance, with telegraphic nerves reaching to the furthermost parts of the earth. Its business was to gather news which it furnished to newspapers belonging to the Alliance. Jack Steele knew Simmonds, the manager, and resolved to pay him an evening call at what was certainly a most inopportune moment. The great hive was a-hum with activity. The wild day on the Stock Exchange was enough of itself to keep it throbbing. Simmonds was a busy man, but he received Jack Steele, who came in cool and self-possessed, with courtesy and respect.

"Well, Simmonds, I suppose you're just rushed to death, so I'll not keep you a moment. I want to see one of your men who is less busy, if, indeed, he is here to-night."

"We're all here to-night, Steele. I hope you've not been dabbling in wheat?"

"Me? No fear. Wheat's rather out of my line."

"Somebody's going to get badly hurt before the week is out."

"So I understand," said Steele nonchalantly, as if it were none of his affair. "By the way, talking of wheat, you gather statistics of the crops from all over the country, don't you — your company, I mean?"

"Oh, yes, several times a year."

"From what office is that done, New York or Chicago?"

"Chicago, of course."

"Who is in charge of that department?"

"Nicholson. Why?"

"I would like to have a chat with him if he's not too busy."

"Well, you've struck the one man who isn't busy to-night. You see, his work is a daylight job."

"What sort of a fellow is he?"

"He's a new man—at least, he's been with us only six months—that is, at this office. He came on from New York. Splendid fellow, though, and well up to his work."

"Good. Can I see him?"

"I'll find out if he's in his room."

Simmonds spoke through a telephone and then said—

"Yes, Mr. Nicholson will see you; but I say, Steele, don't meddle with wheat. If you want any information from him, remember he can't give it out, except to the morning papers."

"Oh, I shan't buy a bushel of wheat; don't be frightened."

"This boy will take you to Mr. Nicholson's room. Good night."

Nicholson proved to be a man of uncertain age. His hair was closely cropped, his face smoothly shaven, and bore a look of determination and power which one might not have expected to find in a mere subordinate."

"Is this Mr. John Steele," he asked pleasantly, "the Napoleon of finance who stood out against Rockervelt?"

"Well, I don't know about the Napoleon part of it, Mr. Nicholson, but Rockervelt and I had a little negotiation awhile ago which I trust ended in our mutual advantage. Now, Mr. Nicholson," continued Steele, sitting down in the chair offered him, "if you are not too busy, I should like to ask you a few questions."

"I am not very busy, Mr. Steele, and shall be pleased to answer any question you like to ask, so long as the information sought belongs to me, and not to my employers."

"Who is your employer, Mr. Nicholson?"

"My employer? Why, the Press Alliance, of course."

"The Press Alliance is one of your employers, I know. Your nominal employer, let us say. It pays you to collect accurate information. Who pays you for disseminating false news in the newspapers of this country?"

If Jack Steele expected a start of guilty surprise or a flash of anger or a demand for explanation, he was disappointed. The impassive face remained impassive. The piercing eyes narrowed a little, perhaps, but he could have sworn that the faint glimmer of a smile hovered about the firm lips. The voice that spoke was under perfect control.

"They say that all things come to him who waits, and here is an illustration of it. The man for whom every reporter in Chicago is searching, and whom I am most desirous to meet, walks right into my office. How many million bushels of wheat did you buy to-day, Mr. Steele?"

Jack Steele was a much more genial person than this man from New York. He threw back his head and laughed.

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"Mr. Nicholson, I am delighted to have made your acquaintance. Your wild guess that I am the buyer of wheat is really flattering to me. Yet your own reference to my little contest with Rockervelt should have reminded you that I deal in railways, and not in grain."

"The reason I wished to meet you," went on Mr. Nicholson, as if the other had not spoken, "is because I have a message to you from my chiefs."

"'Then, Steele, you're as welcome as flowers that bloom in the spring.'"

"Yes, but you have not mentioned who your chiefs are."

"There is no need to mention them, Mr. Steele. When I tell you they own banks in every city in the United States; that the income of the head of our combination is fifty million dollars a year from merely one branch of his activity; that we have *employés* in the United States Treasury powerful enough to have the funds of this country placed for safety in our banks; that my principals can, if they wish, gamble with the savings of the people of the United States deposited in their keeping; that we have agents in every part of the world, and there is not a country in Europe, Asia, or Africa that does not pay tribute to them: when I have said all this, Mr. Steele, I think two things may be taken for granted—first, that no names need be mentioned; second, that you realise you are opposed to a power infinitely greater than that of Mr. Rockervelt or any other financial force that the world contains."

"You are right in both surmises, Mr. Nicholson, and I experience that keen joy which warriors feel with foemen worthy of their steel—if you will excuse the apparent pun on my own name. I am really quoting from Scott—not the railway man of that name, but the poet. And now for your message, Mr. Nicholson."

"You admit, then, that you are the buyer?"

"I'll admit anything in the face of such a formidable rival."

"Very well. My chiefs are the most generous of men."

"Oh, we all know that."

"If you have lost money these last two days, they will refund it. They are even willing to allow you a reasonable profit, and I am empowered to negotiate regarding the figures."

"And all this for pure philanthropy, Mr. Nicholson?"

"All this if you will merely stand aside and not interfere in a market you do not understand, and complicate a situation that is already somewhat delicate."

"And if I refuse to stand aside?"

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"If you refuse, they will crush you, as they have crushed many a cleverer man."

"Ah! that's not tactful, Nicholson, and I'm sure it would not meet the approval of your employers. Your last remark is apt to provoke opposition rather than compliance. Would it surprise you to know that I possess a more potent backer than even your distinguished chief?"

"More potent? Yes, it would surprise me. Have you any reluctance in mentioning the name?"

"Not the slightest—it's a lady."

"A lady?"

"Yes. Dame Nature—a charming old woman if you stand in with her, a blue terror if you go against her. Wheat in America this year will be only three-quarters of a crop, if it is that much. You can joggle with the fact for a little time, but you can't conceal it. Even the great firm on Broadway cannot make a blade of wheat grow where one has been killed by the frost—not in the same year, at least. So you may telegraph to your distinguished principals and tell them that Jack Steele and Dame Nature are going to dance a minuet with those two Corsican brothers of New York, and your fraternal friends will find some difficulty in keeping pace with the music. And so good-bye, Mr. Nicholson."

"Good-bye, Mr. Steele. I am very sorry we cannot come to terms."

Once outside, Jack Steele hailed a cab and drove to the *Chicago Daily Mail* building. Here, as at the Press Alliance, everyone was hard at work; but Steele's name was good for entrance almost anywhere in Chicago, and the managing editor did not keep him waiting.

"Good evening, Mr. Stoliker," Steele began. "I have got in my pocket the greatest newspaper 'beat' that has ever been let loose on Chicago since the Brooklyn Theatre fire."

"Then, Steele, you're as welcome as flowers that bloom in the spring. Out with it."

"There's been a gigantic conspiracy to delude the Press and people of the United States."

"Oh, they're always trying that," said Stoliker complacently.

"Yes, but this time they've succeeded, up to this evening. Just cast your eye over this document."

A managing editor is quick to form an accurate estimate of the proportions of a piece of news submitted to him.

"If anyone else had brought this in," said Stoliker slowly, "do you know what I should have thought?"

"Yes, you would think it an attempt of the bulls to get in out of the rain."

"Exactly. You've hit it the first time. Can you vouch for the accuracy of this?"

"I can."

"You won't be offended, Steele, if I ask you one more question, and only one?"

"I know what the question is."

"What is it?"

"You are going to ask if I have been buying wheat?"

"Well, you seem to know exactly what's in my mind. Conversation is rather superfluous with so sharp a man as you. *Have* you been buying wheat?"

"Yes, I'm the person that has caused the flutter in the market these last two days."

"If I publish this, the price of wheat will instantly jump up."

"No, it won't."

"Oh, that's the evident object of the whole thing. If I prove that the wheat crop of America is from twenty-five to thirty per cent. short, up goes the price of wheat."

"My dear Stoliker, your paper will sell like hot cakes, but no one will believe a word you say. Everyone on 'Change will think exactly as you do—that this is a device of the bulls, and so the price of wheat is likely to remain stationary for some hours. But this sensational statement is bound to make everybody uneasy, and there will be a good deal of telegraphing going on during the forenoon. By the time the evening papers are out, it will begin to dawn on commercial Chicago that you've done the biggest thing that's been done for years. After that, every moment will enhance your reputation."

"Quite so, *if*—and that 'if' is the biggest word in the dictionary just now—if this article is accurate. If it isn't, then the reverse of all you have predicted will happen."

"My dear Stoliker, I was quite prepared for this unbelief. I therefore took the precaution before the bank closed to get a certified cheque for a hundred thousand dollars, and here it is. Pay that into your bank to-morrow, and offer in your paper a hundred thousand dollars to anyone who will prove the report inaccurate. I don't mean in a detail here or there, but the general truthfulness of the statement. It has been compiled by a man I can vouch for, in the employ of the Wheat Belt Line, who has visited every spot mentioned in the report. Now, time is precious; I give you five minutes in which to make up your mind."

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"I don't need them; my mind is made up. I'll print it."

Next day, events proved that Steele was no false prophet. Wheat wobbled for a time up and down, then began to rise steadily, and at last shot up like a rocket, ending at eighty-three and a quarter. Before the week was out, it was well over the dollar mark, and Jack Steele was richer by more than two million dollars. The night of the day in which he sold out, he strolled into the Press Alliance offices and visited his perturbed friend Simmonds.

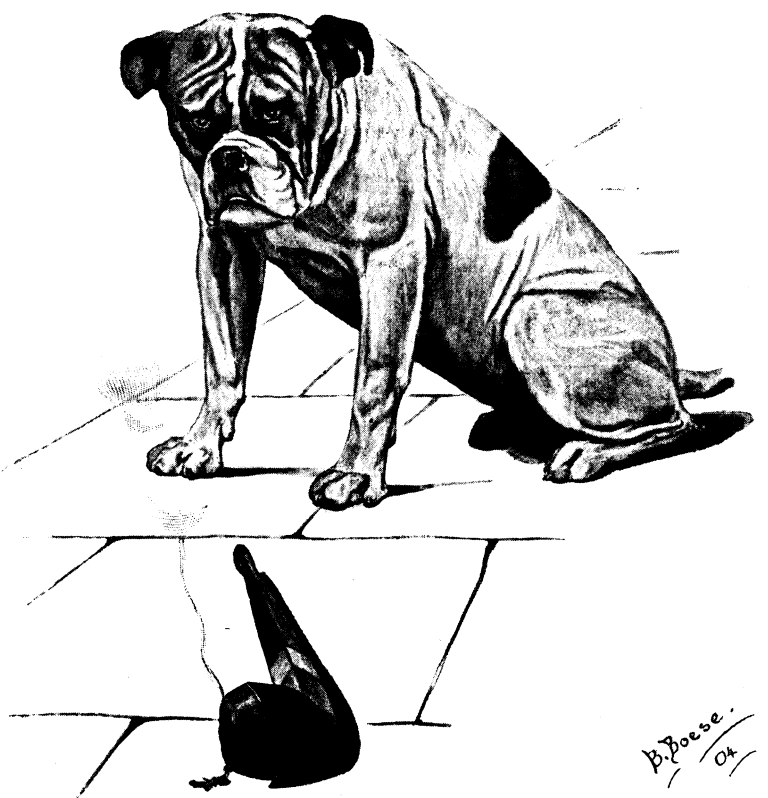
"I would like to see Mr. Nicholson again," he said.

"Oh, curse him!" cried Simmonds, "he's gone to New York; and I wish he had never left there. I suppose you don't know what a hole he put us into, because you're not interested in wheat."

"Really? Why, I was tremendously impressed by Nicholson's manner and appearance!"

"Oh, his manner and appearance were all right. He came here with the very highest recommendations—in fact, he was the one man in our employ of all the hundreds here that I had orders from headquarters not to dismiss on any account. I was as much taken with his looks as you were. I would have sworn he was true to his employers, yet I have not the slightest doubt he sold us out as if we were a flock of sheep."

"You are mistaken, Simmonds. He was perfectly true to his employers."



"LEFT BEHIND IN A HURRY." A STUDY BY B. BOESE.

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THE LITTLE LOVE-GOD.

FROM THE PICTURE BY G. VON C. ZEWY.

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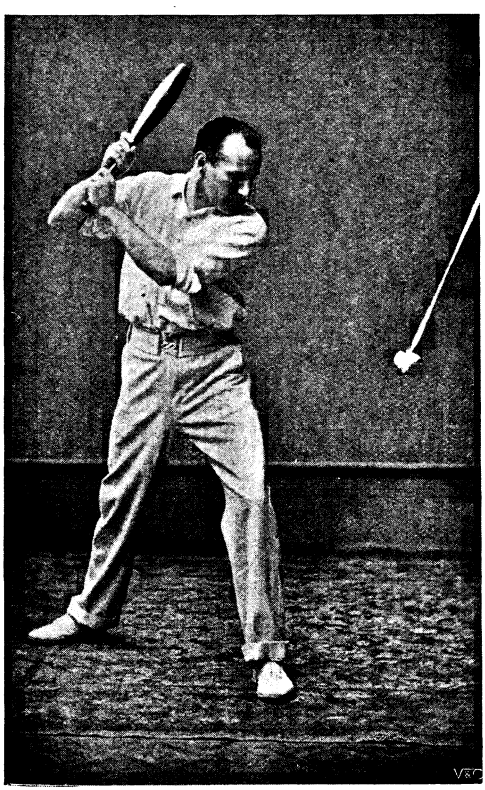
GAMES ONE CAN PRACTISE IN A ROOM.

BY EUSTACE MILES.

Photographs by Mason and Basebe, Cambridge.

IN wet or cold weather, or when the evening is longer than the afternoon, thousands miss the play which they enjoy out of doors. And for many it may often be too dark for them to get their games before or after their day's work, except on Saturday or—in case I shock anyone, I quote from the old English song—"the day that comes betwixt a Saturday and Monday." For the other days they may be too busy in the City and too lazy or tired before and after their business. It is at week-ends that they have their chance of outdoor exercise. On the week-days themselves, what can they do that will not bore or overtire them, and yet will keep them fairly healthy and in training and practice for the week-end recreation? It would be a thousand pities if they dropped this because they did not enjoy it enough, because they were not up to the mark; for with them it may be a case of *aut ludus aut nihil*. Let others substitute Swedish or Swiss, or German or British, or dumb-bell or club or other drill. We must recognise their common sense. But these people of whom we are speaking want play, or else something as near to play as they can get.

PLAYING BACK WITH THE BALL SWINGING.



A DRIVE.

It is not every reader of this magazine who has a ground for football or hockey or lacrosse or other sport, or who would care to play on it by artificial light or with luminous-painted balls and implements and opponents; but almost every reader of this magazine has a bedroom or sitting-room in which a space of a square couple of yards or more can be cleared. I will try to cater for him, asking him to modify freely and to add freely to this brief account of games that he can practise in that space.

I wish Emerson's famous remark, "To be great is to be misunderstood," were true, for then, whenever I wrote about practice for play, I should feel sure that someone was doing his or her level best to make me great. There are many who seem to go through the dailies and monthlies with a lot of abusive labels in their minds, large labels of con-

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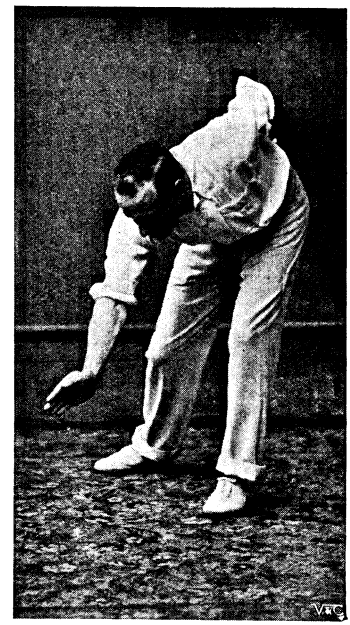
demnation ready gummed, so as to be fastened at once over the whole of any article that shall dare to suggest any sensible training for play. Sometimes under the heading of "Over-Athleticism: Neglect of Serious Work," is a proverb: "Work while you work, play while you play," or a platitude: "Games are all very well as a recreation; indeed, they are very hygienic" (or some such awful word intended to put people off the practice), "but they must not be regarded as important."



A FIVES STROKE LOW DOWN.

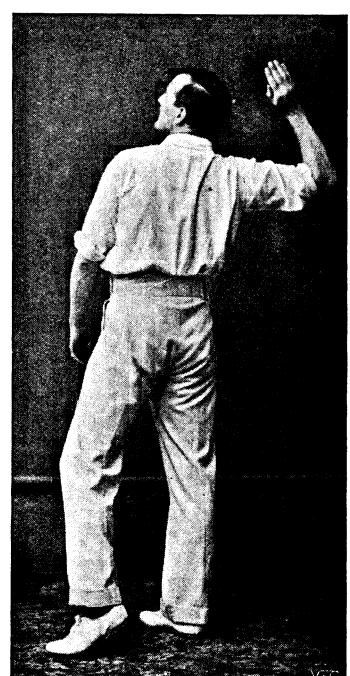
Fortunately there are readers who know better. They regard games as essential; they could justify their play from a round dozen points of view, not the least of which is that it interests and attracts them, whereas "a good brisk walk in the country" generally does not, especially in the dark. Neither does the ordinary physical culture course satisfy all their physical cravings. It is common to imagine that dipsomania is a hard disease to overcome; the passion for stimulants certainly is a powerful master. But the passion for play or some other form of competition is scarcely less powerful to many; we might call it *ludo-mania*. It demands to be satisfied; unsatisfied, it brings discomfort. I hope here to do a little satisfying, to train the imagination, to keep up the everyday fitness, to raise the standard of skill, and, last, but not least, to relieve the mind during play itself, by giving it an apparatus—feet, legs, trunk, arms, hands, neck, eye—working more easily, working at the commands of that most useful servant of ours, the trained under-mind, the sub-consciousness.

BEFORE A FIVES STROKE.

First secure, with the maximum of clear space and air and light, the minimum of cramping clothes. Then attend occasionally and not fussily to the general rules—chin in, small of the back hollow, trunk inclined slightly forward from the hips and evenly balanced on the balls of the feet (which need not be together).

The apparatus will consist of a soft ball (a ping-pong ball is not bad), a stick, a light club or racquet-handle or racquet, and a soft hanging ball (a lawn tennis ball in a string bag will do), not fastened to the floor below, two or three pieces of white tape, and some drawing-pins. In some of the illustrations will appear a handkerchief rolled up as a ball, and having an elastic band round it. This can be suspended by a string from a picture-fastener in the ceiling. The other end of the string can be pulled or let loose, so as to regulate the height of the ball.

One of the best games to practise in a bedroom is Fives without a ball. It is fine exercise, since it involves activity, healthy trunk-movements (stooping, turning, twisting, etc.), and not too violent exercise for the right and left sides alternately and independently. It is good to imagine oneself playing through a rally or two, and playing very well! The



A HIGH VOLLEY AT FIVES.

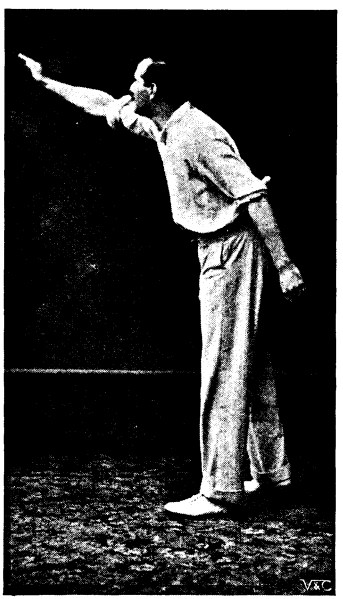
FIVES STROKE WITH TIED UP HANDKERCHIEF.

illustrations show a high volley with a full follow-through; then a low stroke also with a full follow-through. It is important to do the exercise left-handed as well as right-handed, and to get into the alert position after each stroke. The "play" requires scarcely any space.

It is easy to add the hanging ball. The photograph shows the moment just before the hand has reached the ball. It is difficult to describe the stroke. There is plenty of snap about it, and a little body and trunk-movement as well. It is not at all unlike the action of throwing.

Absurd as it may sound, the imagination of a vigorous game of Fives or anything else that attracts the individual will tend to put him in a good temper. Whereas the ordinary drill might be dull, such an exercise as this, while not claiming scientific perfection, may yet be valuable all-round, especially if you relax the side which you are not using; this gives more independent control of the two sides, more physical economy.

A Cricket series needs no description. You can pretend to bowl; then get ready for the ball to be returned; imagine it to be returned; field it; then throw in (we shall come to the throwing directly). Be sure to practise left-handed as well. It seems to be fairly certain that, by increasing the skill of your left hand, you increase the skill of your right hand also. Numerous experiments made in America appear to establish this point.



WITH A FOLLOW THROUGH.

Then, with a stick or a light club, or a bat if you have room, get ready to play an imaginary ball. Suppose it is a ball to which you should play forward. Then play well and straight forward (the tape line on the floor will be useful), with full extension of the left hand, and with your weight coming well over your left foot and your bat going near to your left foot. After the stroke, get ready again, run out, and, if you have space and not too much valuable furniture about, make a drive along the ground to the on boundary. Recover; come back; get ready; put your leg across, and cut. Then prepare to run. Run one step and come back. Get ready; imagine a ball to which you should play back; play back; and so on. Then do this left-handed.

A BACKHAND SERVICE AT RACKETS.

Here, again, it is easy to use the hanging ball. Mr. C. B. Fry improved his batting by practising with a swinging ball in a barn. One has to be content with a modification of this in a small bedroom, but the illustration of this suggests how it can be managed.

Another exercise might be to take that rolled-up handkerchief, which gives a greater variety of angles, or else a lawn-tennis or ping-pong ball, and bowl it at a mark on the wall, then catch it.

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The illustrations show another series. You stoop to pick up the handkerchief or ball; you then throw it at the mark; you get ready to catch it on its return. Notice how this throw has hit rather to the right of the mark. In the next throw I shall exaggerate, and aim slightly to the left of the mark. Here, once more, there will be the left-hand practice as well. It is singular how clumsy one's left hand is for throwing. There seems a certain point at which it is extra weak. But that is soon remedied.

Next may come Football. A kick at a ball near to the ground is illustrated. This I find a very vigorous movement for bedroom drill. The result of a ball kicked from somewhat higher is shown in the other illustration. Of course, all sorts of heights may be tried, and you can imagine not only a "place" or an ordinary kick or a "punt," but also a "drop." Be sure to practise with

DURING THE SERVICE.

both feet in turn. Mr. C. B. Fry says that he learnt a good deal of his kicking by practice with a small ball. It encourages a finer accuracy. Certainly that is likely to be better for the bedroom, unless you adapt a punch-ball for bedroom use, setting it crossways instead of up and down. With a small ball you could easily practise dribbling, shooting, and passing.

Then, if you have room, you can imagine yourself heading, dodging, perhaps even tackling someone. The Americans have a special apparatus for this, a dummy swinging from a rope. The Japanese Jujitsu system has a good exercise for this also.

AFTER THE SERVICE.

If you like, laugh during the practice. Certainly stop if you begin to feel out of breath; do a few breathing-exercises. The less you use your muscles not required for any given movement, the more valuable the practice will be from the point of view of gracefulness, economy, and health.

It would be quite easy to add Hockey practice, including a few steps of running sideways, and so on.

Then Lawn Tennis can be practised, especially the mechanism of the high service, which I have described elsewhere. This could be followed by a back-hand stroke, and this by a fore-hand stroke, this by a smash overhead. Once more, let the practice be left-handed sometimes.

Golf needs a larger space if you are to use the driver. Needless to say, putting is easy enough, and so are certain approach-shots. But you can get some practice for the drive by using a light Indian club. As to the ball, you can have a mark on the floor—for instance, a piece of paper or a cotton-wool ball, or you can use a captive ball, or have an ordinary ball and a padded wall. As Mr. E. F. Benson says, this bedroom practice of a certain stroke again and again, till you get it more and more correct, may be better for your play, may help to remove your

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faults, with less trouble than if you relied simply on a round of golf, in which you practise many strokes, but do not get consecutive practice of one, which is really what you want. Then, during the game, of course, you must think of the game rather than of the mechanism.

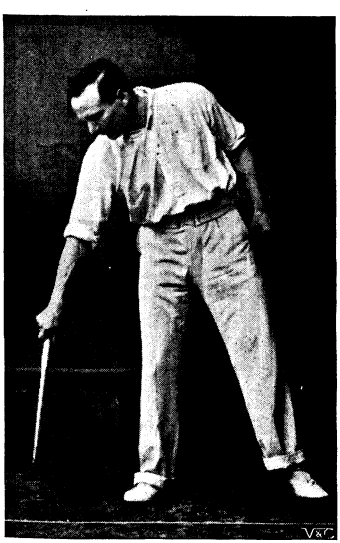
And another word here: if you are a genius and play well by nature, then it may be a mistake to think of the mechanism at all; it may even spoil that mechanism. Those freaks who have made wonderful lightning-calculations in mathematics, without knowing how, may lose their power when someone tries to teach them the elements of mathematics; but that is no reason why the elements of mathematics should not be taught to ordinary people.

BACKHAND STROKE, EXAGGERATED, FOLLOWING A LINE UPON THE FLOOR.

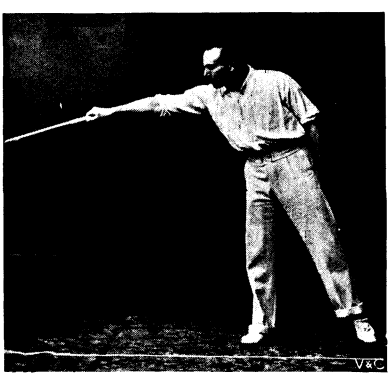
AND THUS.

And there is this point as well. I do not profess to be an expert, and so would advise you to get very good models. You can see them for yourself, or buy papers with instantaneous photographs; most of the papers have these to-day.

I hope no one will think that I wish to confine people to only a few games if I now come to my own favourites—Rackets and Tennis. The exercises are worth practising, not only for the sake of the game, but also because they are healthy.



ANOTHER POSITION.



FOLLOW THROUGH (EXAGGERATED).

The first illustration shows a backhand stroke, much exaggerated. First the racquet is lifted, the body being, of course, in the sideways position. Then attention is paid to the beginning of the stroke, then to the end of it, the follow-through. The white line (the tape) shows how much or how little you deviate from this. Clearly, the longer you keep to that line, the more chance you will have of meeting the ball. The ball is going to travel nearly along that line. If your racquet only touches that line for five inches instead of several feet, you are unlikely to give yourself the best chance of hitting it fair and square. Then, during the game in the court, you will probably find that your stroke, which you do *not* think about now, has improved itself. I find that a hundred strokes is quite enough for a single practice. It takes me a few minutes to do them. I begin with the backhand as here; I proceed to the forehand. Then I do a few forehand and backhand services, which are also shown in the illustrations.

In another article I hope to show that the backhand stroke done left-handed is excellent

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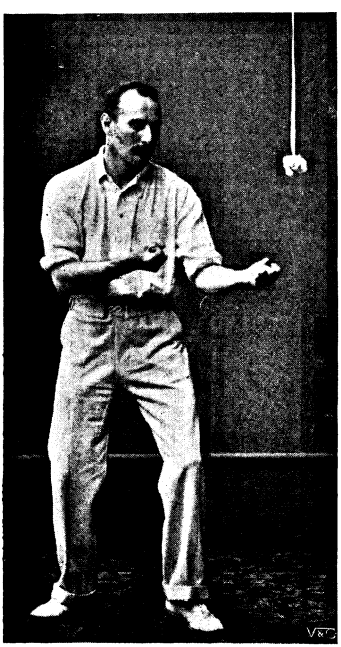
THE TIED-UP HANDKERCHIEF AS A FOOTBALL.

practice not only for Golf, but also for Cricket. The forehand drive at Golf involves a backhand stroke with the left hand, as well as a forehand stroke with the right.

This line along the floor (it may be tape, as here, or chalk, or something else) will be useful as practice for Bowls. You can imagine the ball, or you can get something to represent it. It will be useful also for Croquet practice, and for putting at Golf, and so on.

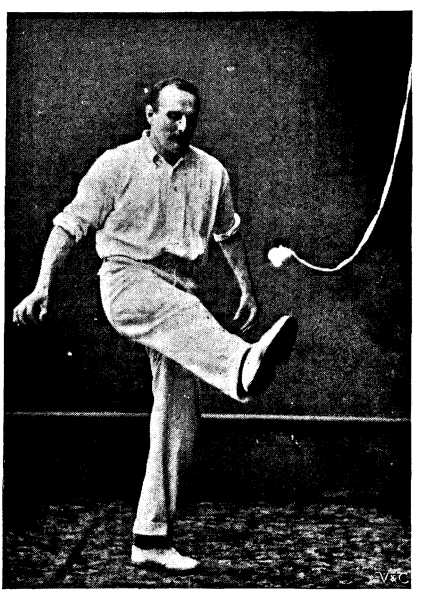


THE TIED-UP HANDKERCHIEF AS A PUNCH-BALL.

Everyone knows the value of a Punch-Ball. The photograph shows how you can use the rolled-up handkerchief as a Punch-Ball. It makes no noise; it returns at various angles. It adapts itself also for the practice of fencing-lunges.

Boxing and fencing are not exactly games. When once we come off the ground of games, we open up too vast a field. Gymnastics, for instance, can easily be practised with the help of a chair or two, the bed, the wall, the inevitable floor, and so on. Each should choose his own games. To some, gymnastics are games; to others, they are sheer drudgery.

Some may prefer tight-rope-walking. I know Americans who practised it. They had a strong rope stretched from one solid piece of furniture to another. If this is too much to ask, then you can practise walking along the line on the floor, pretending it is a rope. There is skipping also, in its many varieties. There are the athletic sports—the high jump, the vault,



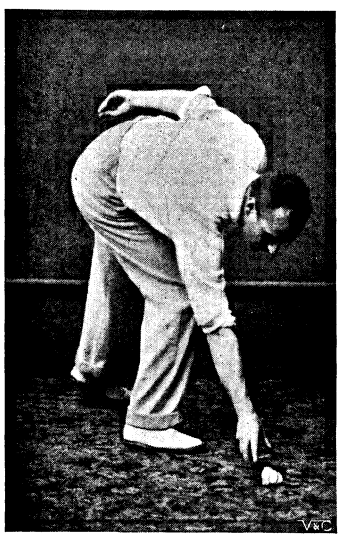
THE FOOTBALL.

and putting the shot and throwing the hammer. The imitation of putting the shot gives magnificent movements if you practise it with each side in turn; in fact, I am not sure that these are not among the very best.

The walk-and-run can be imitated in a space about a yard square. Swimming movements—you can imitate the leg-stroke by crouching, though this is not very satisfactory—require a larger space. Mr. E. F. Benson has practised some exercises for skating in his bedroom, imagining himself to have skates on. Others would like to practise mountaineering, perhaps up an inclined plank. The rowing-machine is familiar to everyone.

The practice of fly-fishing is possible, too. So is shooting. Wherever it is feasible, these exercises should be done with the left side instead of with the right, as a change.

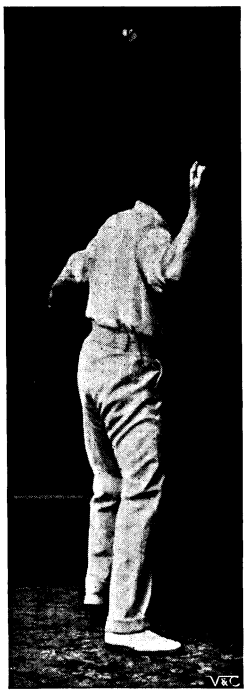
The object of these, and any other exercises you like, is not to spoil the game itself, but the very reverse — to improve its mechanisms and to keep you in some training and some practice if you are going to play the game at all. No one grudges time for piano-practice, for step-dancing,



STOOP AND PICK UP A HANDKERCHIEF—

for jumping, if they are going to do these things afterwards. They do not enjoy the piano less because they have practised chords and scales; they do not enjoy the waltzing less because they have practised the steps. The result of the practice is to make them less conscious of the steps, to give them better tools for use during the play. They no longer need to think of these tools at all; they should find their games less serious and more enjoyable.

By the way, some games can be played in a bedroom. I find Hop-scotch a good example, but this article does not deal with actual games. It only deals with practice for them.



—THEN—

—THROW IT AT A MARK ON THE WALL—

Its object is to improve play and to give good exercise—not ideal, not strictly scientific, but healthy, and, what is more important, exercise that many people *will do* because there is a savour of play about it, and, perhaps, the memory of some of the purest pleasures in life. Although a Swedish drill might have many advantages over these movements, comparatively few game-players care to go through it, for they find that it does not attract them. Such drill as I suggest

—AND CATCH IT.

may make up for what it lacks in science by its effects as a tonic and as an outlet for pent-up energy. It is not commanded to all; it is simply offered to many. It must be judged, like everything else, by its all-round results.

There are "practical" people who find fault with us because we "run after a piece of leather or hit a piece of indiarubber"—this is how they regard play. It is time we exposed their folly. They can analyse the football, and classify it as leather, indiarubber, thread, and air; but that is just where these "practical" materialists

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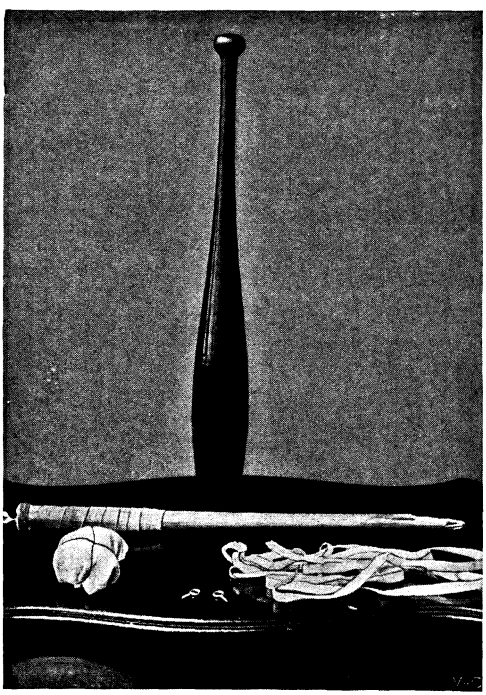
fail. For any given thing—be it a food or a football—is not what it is, but what it is not. It is to you what you think that it is. It should be to you what you can with most advantage think that it is. In a game of football, then, the ball certainly is not to you mere leather, indiarubber, thread, and air; exactly what it is I fail to be able to describe, but at least it has in it one essential which escapes the notice of the "matter-of-fact" critic—and we can call that romance.

Now, anyone with a fair amount of health or, on the other hand, a fair amount of morbidness, can see and feel romance in the sea or lake or river, the moon or stars, the fields or woods or hill. But what we want is to see romance in common things made by man or by machinery. Our cities and our rooms are packed full of things not beautiful to look at—perhaps even ugly. The supreme art is to see in them a something not dry and depressing and unhelpful, but the very reverse.

What the city-dweller needs is to be taken far oftener out of his existence and surroundings, as his awfully barren "education" has veiled these from him, and to see in them not so many combinations of elements, but so many possible instruments for health and imagination.



A FEW IMPLEMENTS.

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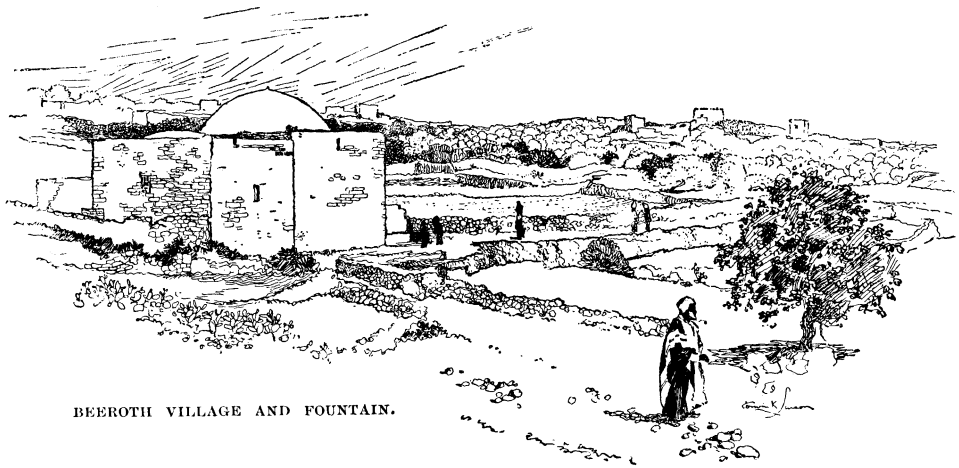
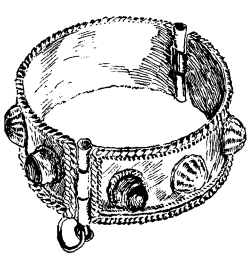


BEEROTH VILLAGE AND FOUNTAIN.

A LITTLE PILGRIMAGE.

BY CORWIN KNAPP LINSON.*

THE romance of Palestine is of compelling interest; its constant stimulus to the imagination is one of its chiefest charms. It has been called "the high-road of civilisations and the battlefield of empires—an open channel of war and commerce for nearly the whole world; the vantage-ground of the world's highest religions."



An obscure little village three hours north from Jerusalem, in nowise remarkable save that its youth reaches back into the days of myth and fable, which was old when Greece was emerging from the prehistoric shadows, has been made an example of this aftergrowth of story on more solid fact. Beeroth, retaining its ancient name of El-Bireh, is not mentioned in the New Testament, and yet in some manner on Luke's narrative of the losing of the boy Jesus has grown the belief that at Beeroth Mary missed her child, and with Joseph returned to the city to find him. And though this story was not put on record until the fourteenth century, a church had been built here two hundred years earlier.

I was living within ten minutes' walk of the walls of Jerusalem, on the venerable highway leading from the Damascus Gate straight to Nazareth, the pathway trodden by Abraham, by Jacob, and by countless others before the Son of Man travelled its weary length.

And since our sentiment has twined about the place like a tender vine, let it not be bruised by the rough hand of fact. Surely the matter is not essential, and enough is the certainty that Beeroth is the first watering-place northward from Jerusalem on the way to Galilee. This village, then, was a worthy objective point for a little pilgrimage, in the month when the Feast of the Passover was celebrated. I was to be ready in the small hours, and it was the ghostly hour of three when my reluctant eyes opened to the wan glimmer visible through the window. Into my small room the light filtered, gradually revealing the arched ceiling and whitened walls. The stars were melting into the grey infinity when I joined my two companions in the open court, into which streamed the languid light of the moon. And even now the brightening sky in the east heralded the coming of the sun as we mounted horse and started briskly off.

It is the sweetest time in the Oriental day when "the mountains and the hills break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field clap their hands." For it is as though

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the earth were born anew, and in the delicious coolness Nature realises her opportunity and luxuriates in the heavy night-dews, fortifying herself against the oncoming day. The joyous spirit of the moment was communicated to us by electric currents, and the very hoofs of the horses ran musically on the stones, those stones of roseate hue that lie so thickly scattered over the Judean hills.

For two hours we gaily threaded our devious ways, with the inspiriting freshness breathing into our nostrils, the limpid clearness of the morning delighting our senses. Finally we approached the division of paths

leading—the left to Râmallâh, the right to El-Bîreh, or Beeroth.

Passing us occasionally, going to Jerusalem with butter and eggs and little jars of *leben*,* that showed their thick, creamy throats as they were held up to us, were small companies of women in single file. As one blue procession went by, the leader called to us: "Why should you ride and we walk? Why is your lot better than ours?" Given the opportunity for leisurely argument, we could not by any philosophy have made satisfactory answer. We could only admit the fact as they saw it, and recognise the universal world-plaint of discontent.

They carry themselves, these women, like figures on antique frieze. As they stride along, holding in sure balance on their heads their jars and baskets of homely produce, they tread the stony paths with the grace and largeness of action that we of the Occident have grown to regard as belonging only to the age of Praxiteles.

The men also are admirable in the simplicity of their gestures, the big lines of their attitudes, the swing of their draperies. I saw a youth fling his mantle over his shoulder and fold it about him exactly in the manner of the classic Greek, sculptural in his finely unconscious pose. God save the day when these sons of Canaan clothe their limbs in our ungainly garments!

Before us rode a *fellah* astride his donkey, whose foal ambled at her heels, stopping now and again as a bit of herbage tempted him, and then galloping on in infantile unsteadiness. Its coat was furry as a cat's, its diminutive body light enough to carry in one's arms. Behind the man walked a woman, upon her head the usual burden, accepting her position with the uncomplaining apathy of the Oriental inheriting centuries of submission, plodding on after her lord, who sat unconcernedly kicking his heels against the sides of his other beast of burden.

In Palestine the mother of men is the servant of men. Being a part of the household chattels, she is sold for as large a sum as her father can extort from the prospective bridegroom. She is a thing, a piece of goods. The father of a first-born son proudly calls himself after the boy's name, but his girl babe is not reckoned among his children. Her infant shoulders learn to bear the burdens, her little feet patter their way to the fountain even from the moment their tiny strength can support the weight of the jar. Her whole life is one of grinding, baking, fetching water, waiting upon others; at twelve she is sold into married service; growing old in middle life, she may see herself supplanted by a younger wife; often being robbed of her sons by the military conscription; and finally she is put away as the last breath is leaving her body. So, she who accompanied the man before us followed him laboriously over the stony paths like an obedient dog.

With ever-increasing intensity the sun climbed higher, inexorably higher, and the moisture vanished, licked up by the feverish tongues of light. A layer of heated air quivered in dizzy dance over the earth. Nature began to pant and languish under the relentless tyranny of the sky.

The path glared up at us ferociously. Puffy lizards, hugging the rocks, poked their

* Thickened milk.

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"GOING TO JERUSALEM WITH BUTTER AND EGGS, AND LITTLE JARS OF LEBEN, WERE SMALL COMPANIES OF WOMEN."

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heads from between the crevices. Wheatfields began to disappear as we climbed the hills towards Beeroth, their living green giving place to a barren, burnt grey. Not a tree, not a spot of shade anywhere, nothing but the pitiless hammering of a brassy sun

upon the earth, and the blinding reflection cast into our faces from the lifeless fields.

I crouched in my saddle, listlessly allowing the horse its own head. My *kufeiyeh** was wrapped loosely about my neck and face. The sun's rays could not penetrate its folds, though they beat upon us and enveloped us in a blinding brilliancy with uncompromising fierceness. No word passed between us—each was doing battle with the heat, with no energy to spare.

Thus we were carried onward over the hills for an hour and a half, until the path merged into the lane leading to the fountain at the village entrance.

We had been three and a half hours on the road, and the horses eagerly tramped through the overflow and around to the stone reservoir that held the cool fluid. How quickly their noses plunged under the rippling surface! How delicious was the sound of their drinking, champing at times at the bits! For very sympathy with their joy in it, we prolonged our halt the while they pawed the wet stones and nosed the water again and again.

The two or three women there regarded us with small curiosity, and proceeded with their task of filling the water-jars, balancing them on their heads with long-practised dexterity as they walked away.

They also wore the universal charm-colour against the Evil Eye. If the garment is not blue, the colour is found in chains of glass beads, or on their arms in bracelets, and blue ornaments decorate the head-dress. Even their animals are protected by tassels of blue beads on their trappings.

These dangling pyramids of beads, and triangled bits of metal with the blue eye in the centre, once possessed a peculiar symbolism now lost to the people. We know the triangle was the mystic emblem of the Eternal Deity, whose unutterable name was written within; and this simple sign of Majesty has fallen to the state of a superstition, a charm against evil spirits and magic. The jewellery of the Arab peoples repeats the triangle with the central eye, and this figure is noticeable in repetition in their embroideries and in the tiled openings in the low walls about their housetops. It has been held to be a survival of a very ancient idea, even antediluvian, having a common origin with similar motives used by the primitives of America.

The rampant traveller leaves Jerusalem at daybreak, and, after ten miles, passes Beeroth and hastens on for yet another ten miles to camp. But the Oriental, who hurries leisurely, will depart in the afternoon, to rest in the day's decline at the end of a four-hour journey. So it is supposed that Joseph started his little family homeward in time to stop at nightfall at the village, there to enjoy its fountain and refresh themselves for the longer journey on the morrow.

As I looked over the burning waste we had traversed, the vision of that far-away happening rose before me. At the Feast of the Passover, multitudes numbering hundreds of thousands came to the sacred city from the farthest reaches of Syria and beyond. The highways leading into the city were thronged with the surging host for days before and after the feast. In the hurly-burly of the swarming myriads, men upon asses beating, kicking, and crying their way along; trains of camels moving in rhythmic defile, excited beings shouting to their fellows, bewildered women calling to their children; atoms of the crowd pushing here and there avoiding collisions, passing and repassing other atoms . . . in the bustle and tumultuous movement, what wonder that a small, eager boy of twelve, agape at the tremendous

* A square of cloth folded diagonally and worn on the head.

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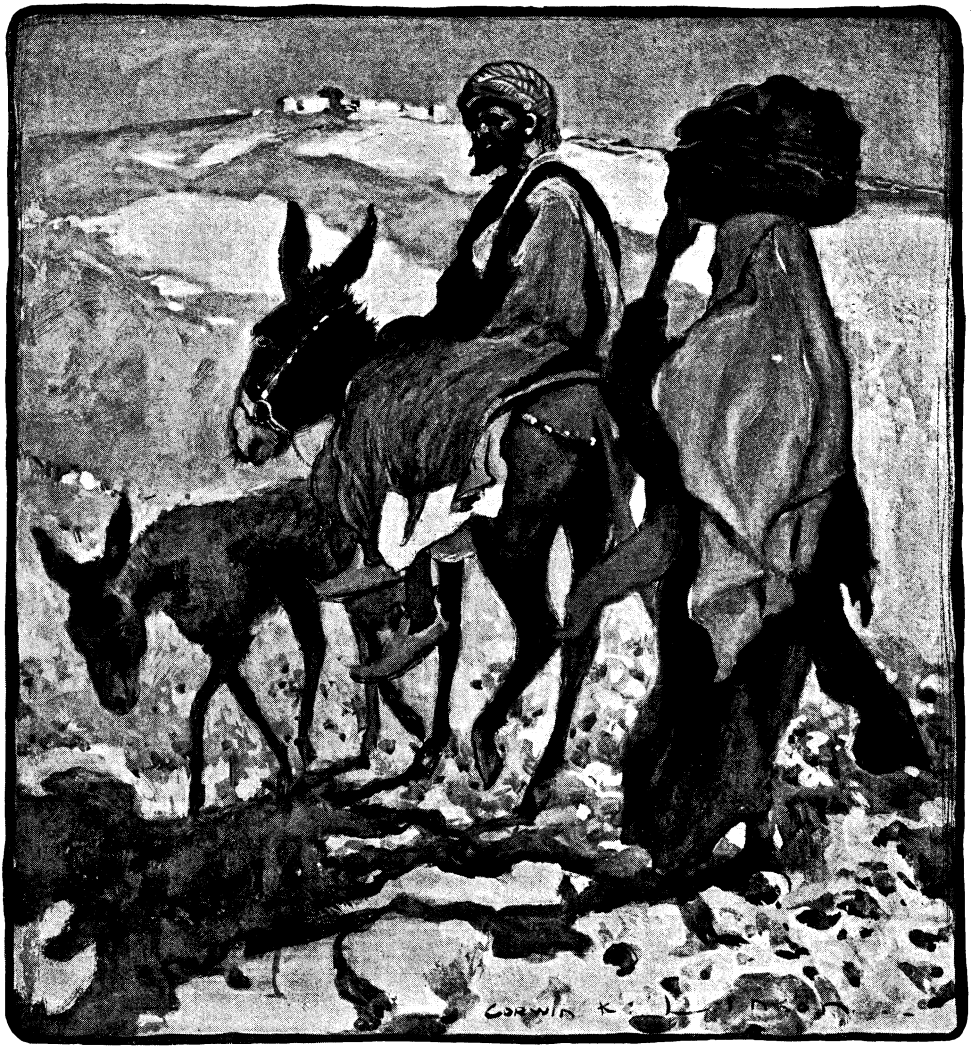

"PLODDING ON AFTER HER LORD."

passage of life, should be lost in the flood, swallowed up in the turbulent river? One of the currents had swept him away from his people, and, as on the crest of a wave, he is carried onward and tossed hither and thither in the eddy. Adrift on the tide, he feels his only safety to lie within the walls of the harbour just left, and so finds his way back into the city and the Temple. His mother and Joseph easily suppose him to be with "their kinsfolk and acquaintance" in the smaller crowd that threads its way northward from among the hordes before the gates. But at Beeroth he is not to be found, and "they returned to Jerusulem seeking for him . . . ."

We left our horses in the *khan* adjoining an earthen hut which answered to the village coffee-house, and which was filled with a blue smoke from the brazier of coals on which the coffee was heated. In the streets, narrow between the low walls over which we could almost see, we passed processions of women going to and coming from the fountain, where there were now others beating clothes under the full sun, laughing and gossiping, while we longed for relief from its fervour.

There were numerous fig-trees, luxurious in verdure, noble in their dimensions, but their shade was for the patches of lentils and barley, and the tiny gardens scarcely larger than the spread of the branches. Ah! those

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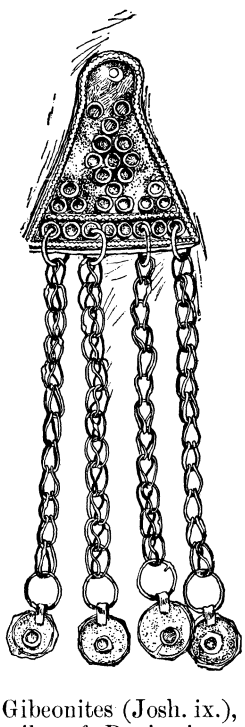
little gardens! How tantalisingly cool they looked under the green shade! Balm to the aching eyes were those havens of repose in that scorching environment! We could not presume to enter a walled enclosure, though the door of every man's house stands open to the stranger. What saith the gentle Shepherd? "He that entereth not by the door, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." So these cases being denied us, and the houses evil smelling by reason of the pungent smoke, we wandered to and fro through the baking streets. And then we came suddenly upon a scene that transported us to the days of the Patriarchs.



It was as though time had not been since the days of Abraham.

A half-dozen men were seated on the ground spinning long threads of black wool, twisting and turning it by means of curious circular spindles that were held suspended from their rapidly working fingers. In their postures and the *ensemble* of their draperies and grouping they were archaic, realising perfectly the sentiment of the long ago of sacred story.

But the stones of Beeroth are hoary with age. When the Israelitish hosts beat at its doors, the place was one of the "cities" of the wily Gibeonites (Josh. ix.), and was seized for the tribe of Benjamin. And this was nearly three hundred years before the Trojan War, and seven centuries before the beginnings of Rome!

We felt the breath of ancient things in the sluggish air. Where the path to Râmallâh leaves the main track, Ataroth (Josh. xvi. 5–7) lies on a height. A little to the south is Ramah (2 Chron. xvi. 1), fortified by King Baasha of Israel against Asa of Judah. Gibeah (1 Sam. xv. 34), the home of Saul, and Sha'fât—"Nob (1 Sam. xxii. 19), the city of the priests"—are on the highway and conspicuous from Jerusalem.

So that the ruin of a Crusaders' church, though little short of eight centuries old, is, by comparison, quite modern. Its battered, roofless walls and painted arches stand amid the native huts like something alien to the soil, eloquent of another epoch when armed knights knelt within it and the solemn Mass echoed to its peak. Its stones have heard the clanking of long swords and seen the flashing of bright helmets; but they now listen to the fig-leaves whispering in the breezes, or lie in their crumbling heaps under the silent stars. The great seas and the naked hills alone endure, themselves ephemeral to Him in whose sight a "thousand years are as a watch in the night." The pendulum of the ages sways forth and back, ticking off the succession of the nations, their great monuments left subject to the elements, and their kings in turn snuffed out like a candle-light in a strong wind.

One people after another using the same material, the great ones of the earth treading on their predecessors' heels, and the Greeks, Romans, Arabs, and Franks building with the *débris* left behind. . . . .

The open spaces of the ruin are given over to filth and refuse, and little, bronzed descendants of the Canaanites mount its tottering walls, and creeping things dart in and out of the masonry.

While resting in the shadow of a near-by rock, an old woman, passing, stopped and looked into our faces with painful scrutiny from under a withered, trembling hand. Then, laboriously, she climbed the little slope and crouched beside us. When she had regained her breath, she told of her only son taken from her for the Army. He had been her only support in her old age, and she had nearly wept her sight away for the want of him. He had never been heard from since. It was not a long tale, but to her it had the sense of a tragedy. At last she arose, and including us in a final, searching gaze as though one might by chance be he, she hobbled away.

It had been my hope to get a picture here. But never had I found a more unresponsive spot; and though we lingered until well on into the afternoon, lunching in the shade of a friendly olive-tree, studying the details of houses and walls and the owners of them, I finally abandoned the idea. So we searched out our horses and left the village seething in the heat, to return by way of Râmallâh, twenty minutes away. The odour that hangs over every assemblage of abodes in Palestine, the acrid smell of burning from their ovens, filled our nostrils until we were well out in

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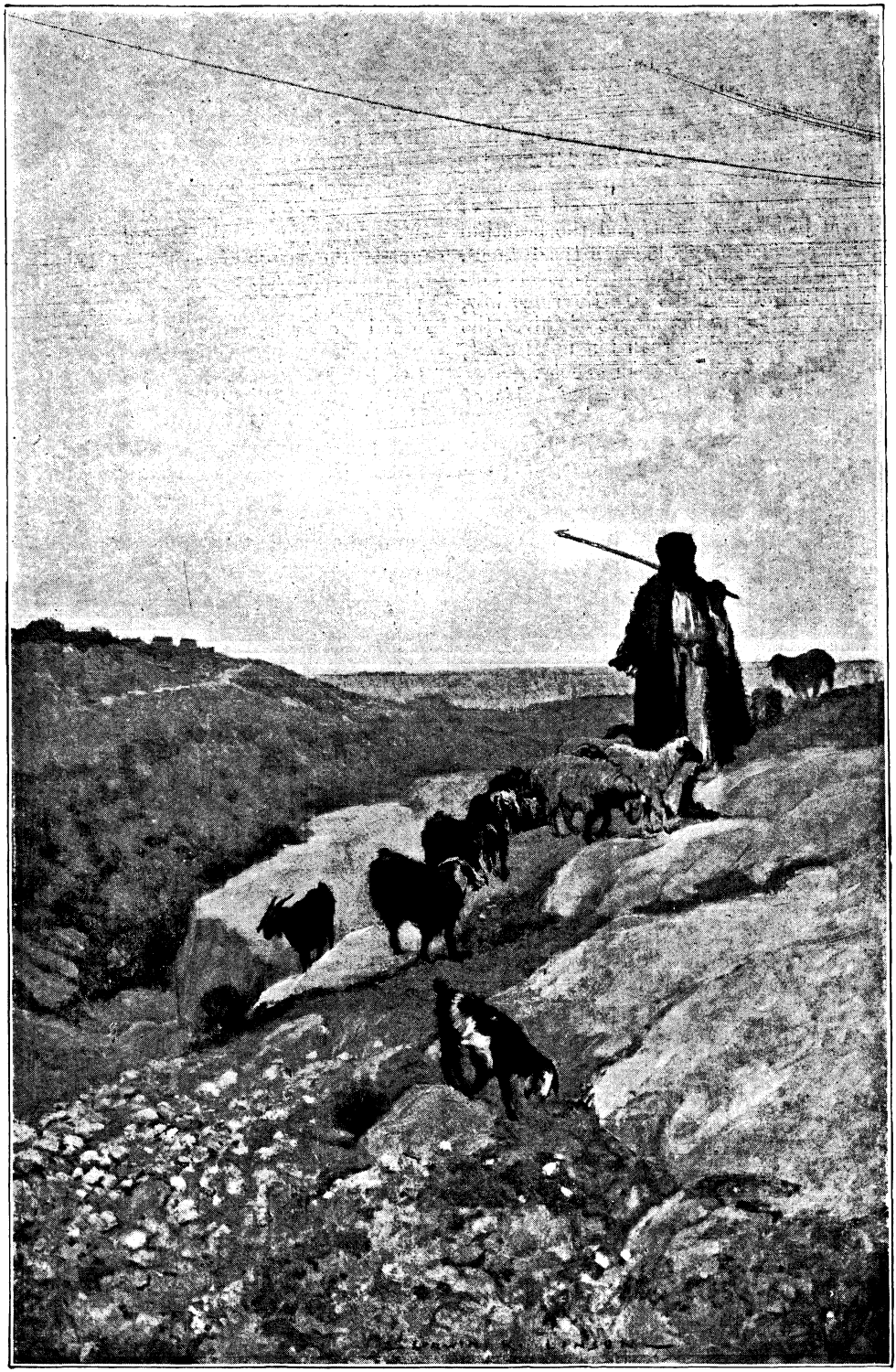

"SHEPHERDS WERE TAKING HOME THEIR FLOCKS."

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the fields, only to be met with again at Râmallâh.

Just before entering the village we reached a point from which we could view the "Great Sea" glittering in the west. When I had passed here earlier, it had been in the midst of a diaphanous vapour that had veiled the world in mystery. Now the air was marvellously clear, and the thirty odd miles of hill and plain between us and the beautiful Mediterranean appeared but half the distance. This singular deception of the vision is notable in this atmosphere. In the same way, from the summit of the Mount of Olives, the Dead Sea appears less than ten miles away, while actually it is more than twenty.

Where we halted is established a bit of what we deem civilisation: a fine house fitted with every requirement for comfort, a garden wrested from the rocks, and, bizarre apparition, an American windmill. It is the Quaker mission, and its kindly head received us with genial hospitality. Under his "vine and fig-tree" we were in a proper frame of mind to appreciate, with fervour, the rest and refreshment so generously provided.

And so at last, under the declining sun, mercifully hidden behind a mass of clouds that banded the western horizon, we traversed the paths almost lost in the reaches of encircling desert. A few vineyards terraced on the slopes, a slight descent, and we were well on our way before the hurrying shadows overtook us and raced on after the ever-fleeing fiery glory in the east. As the light faded, the hills massed together as a phalanx shoulder to shoulder, losing their distressing details, becoming more and more royal, wearing a purple mantle under a crown of gold. Shepherds were taking home their flocks, crying always their inimitable calls, preceding the sheep and the goats, that followed every tone and gesture.

As we passed Sha'fât, now on our right, the hamlet became a silhouette of cubes against the west. A flock larger than usual occupied the road on either side and before and behind us, filling the air with the pat-pats of their feet, dodging under our horses' noses even. Presently they were all assembled villageward, their mass surrounding the shepherd, who stood statuesque against a bar of light.

The village, the landscape a-tremble in the magic glow; the shepherd, the flock, a passing woman with jar aloft . . . . it was a picture of Bible-land to carry in my memory to my fast approaching journey's end.

A REPUTATION.

HIS eyes looked bravely out on life,
With always just the same bright smile—
Which of us guessed, that all the while
His soul was full of storm and strife?

His voice was always strong and glad,
To cheer his weary fellow men:
We learnt fresh courage from it then,
But now we know his heart was sad.

He laboured bravely for the sake
Of other souls less strong than he—
How was it that we did not see
His own brave heart was like to break?

L. G. MOBERLY.

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AYESHA

THE RETURN OF "SHE."

By H. RIDER HAGGARD.*

SYNOPSIS OF FOREGOING CHAPTERS.—The return of "She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed" is recorded by Ludwig Horace Holly, the friend of that Leo Vincey whom Ayesha the beautiful loved in the awful tombs of Kôr. When the record begins, the two men are living in an old house remote upon the seashore of Cumberland, where they have been slowly recovering from the horror of the passing of Ayesha in the flames—a doom that seemed one of complete extinction, yet was charged with the strange last words: "I die not. I shall come again and shall once more be beautiful. I swear it—it is true." On a sullen August night, Leo is thrilled by a vision of Ayesha in all her former loveliness. She beckons him, and in a vision his spirit follows her into a realm of snowy peaks far beyond the furthest borders of Thibet. A sign in the clouds at dawn is repeated from this vision to both Leo and Holly, and together they start for Central Asia. Sixteen years of toil, struggle, and strange adventure pass, and they are still searching for "a mountain peak shaped like the Symbol of Life." After many wanderings they find themselves in a country where no European has ever set foot, on one of the spurs of the vast Cherga mountains, far eastward from Turkestan. A perilous ascent into the unexplored mountain fastness leads them to the revelation of "the *crux ansata*, the Symbol of Life itself." Rescued from drowning by a beautiful woman and an aged man, they are conducted through "The Gate" into the kingdom and city of Kaloon. Their saviours, they learn, are the Khania or Queen of Kaloon, and a venerable physician of magical powers. Is this woman Ayesha? No; they conjecture her rather to be Amenartas, who wrote the "sherd" of the former chronicle. She falls in love with Leo, and he and Holly learn that her husband, the Khan, is a madman. Simbri, the magician, and Atene, the Khania, have already received a solemn charge from the "Hesea" of a "College" in the Mountain of Fire to receive two strangers and bring them safely to the Mountain. But Atene's love for Leo makes her detain the travellers awhile in Kaloon, and she even proposes that the Khan shall be murdered so that she can wed Leo. To this the Englishman replies: "I go to ask a certain question of the Oracle on yonder mountain peak. With your will or without it, I tell you that I go, and afterwards you can settle which is the stronger—the Khania of Kaloon or the Hesea of the House of Fire." The Khan himself assists the escape of the travellers for their further journey, but his jealousy has been aroused, and after they have set out on their journey to the fire-crowned Mountain he pursues them with his death-hounds. After a long chase, a few of the brutes, and the Khan, overtake them, and a terrible struggle ensues, in which Leo and Holly eventually prove the victors, and the Khan is slain. The Khania and Simbri overtake them and seek to persuade them to return, but they refuse. The Khania leaves them, saying: "We do not part thus easily. You have summoned me to the Mountain, and even to the Mountain I will follow you. Aye, and there I will meet its spirit. . . . I will match my strength and magic against hers, as it is decreed that I shall do." On the Mountain itself they meet again with Atene, who brings thither her dead husband to the burying-place of the rulers of Kaloon. From a priest, Oros, who goes with them, they learn that for thousands of years this Mountain has been the home of a peculiar fire-worship, of which the head hierophant is a woman. To the veiled figure of Hes, on her throne, the two Englishmen tell of their wandering search. In answer to the challenge of Atene, the Hesea shows them a vision of events which happened long ago in the Caves of Kôr. Picture succeeds picture until all is blank, and then she tells how Ayesha first met Kallikrates in the early ages. Suddenly she reveals herself as Ayesha; but to remove all doubt she unveils before them, revealing herself in all her withered age. Atene bids Leo choose between her and Ayesha. Leo then kneels down and kisses the wrinkled head. At which Atene says: "Thou hast chosen. Take now thy bride and let me hence." Ayesha then begins to pray aloud, to some unseen Power, for the return of her former loveliness, and suddenly she is transfigured into radiant beauty once again, and claims Leo for the man whom she loved of old. Atene is baffled in a sudden attack upon the mysterious creature's life.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BETROTHAL.

TOGETHER we descended the multitudinous steps and passed the endless, rock-hewn passages till we came to the door of the dwelling of the high-priestess and were led through it into a hall beyond. Here Ayesha parted from us, saying that she was outworn, as, indeed, she seemed to be with an utter weariness, not of the body, but of the spirit. For her delicate form drooped like a rain-laden lily, her eyes grew dim as those of a person in a trance, and her voice came in a soft, sweet whisper, the voice of one speaking in her sleep.

"Good-bye," she said to us. "Oros will guard you both, and lead you to me at the appointed time. Rest you well."

So she went, and the priest led us into a beautiful apartment that opened on to a sheltered garden. So overcome were we also by all that we had endured and seen, that we could scarcely speak, much less discuss these marvellous events.

"My brain swims," said Leo to Oros. "I desire to sleep."

He bowed and conducted us to a chamber where were beds, and on these we flung ourselves down and slept, dreamlessly, like little children.

When we awoke, it was afternoon. We rose and bathed, then saying we wished to be alone, went together into the garden,

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where even at this altitude, now, at the end of August, the air was still mild and pleasant Behind a rock by a bed of campanulas and other mountain flowers and ferns, was a bench near to the banks of a little stream, on which we seated ourselves.

"What have you to say, Horace?" asked Leo, laying his hand upon my arm.

"Say?" I answered. "That things have come about most marvellously! that we have dreamed aright and laboured not in vain; that you are the most fortunate of men, and should be the most happy."

He looked at me somewhat strangely and answered—

"Yes, of course; she is lovely, is she not? But," and his voice dropped to its lowest whisper, "I wish, Horace, that Ayesha were a little more human, even as human as she was in the Caves of Kôr. I don't think she is quite flesh and blood; I felt it when she kissed me—if you can call it a kiss—for she barely touched my hair. Indeed, how can she be who changed thus in an hour? Flesh and blood are not born of flame, Horace."

"Are you sure that she was so born?" I asked. "Like the visions on the fire, may not that hideous shape have been but an illusion of our minds? May she not be still the same Ayesha whom we knew in Kôr, not re-born, but wafted hither by some mysterious agency?"

"Perhaps. Horace, we do not know—I think that we shall never know. But I admit that to me the thing is terrifying. I am drawn to her by an infinite attraction; her eyes set my blood on fire, the touch of her hand is as that of a wand of madness laid upon my brain. And yet between us there is some wall, invisible, still present. Or perhaps it is only fancy. But, Horace, I think that she is afraid of Atene. Why, in the old days the Khania would have been dead and forgotten in an hour—you remember Ustane?"

"Perhaps she may have grown more gentle, Leo, who, like ourselves, has learned hard lessons."

"Yes," he answered, "I hope that is so. At any rate, she has grown more divine—only, Horace, what kind of a husband shall I be for that bright being, if ever I get so far?"

"Why should you not get so far?" I asked angrily, for his words jarred upon my tense nerves.

"I don't know," he answered; "but on general principles, do you think that such fortune will be allowed to a man? Also, what did Atene mean when she said that man and spirit cannot mate—and—other things?"

"She meant that she *hoped* they could not, I imagine; and, Leo, it is useless to trouble yourself with forebodings that are more fitted to my years than yours, and probably are based on nothing. Be a philosopher, Leo. You have striven by wonderful ways such as are unknown in the history of the world; you have attained. Take the goods the gods provide you—the glory, the love and the power—and let the future look to itself."

Before he could answer, Oros appeared from round the rock, and, bowing with more than his usual humility to Leo, said that the Hesea desired our presence at a service in the Sanctuary. Rejoiced at the prospect of seeing her again before he had hoped to do so, Leo sprang up, and we accompanied him back to our apartment.

Here priests were waiting, who, somewhat against his will, trimmed his hair and beard, and would have done the same for me had I not refused their offices. Then they placed gold-embroidered sandals on our feet, and wrapped Leo in a magnificent, white robe, also richly worked with gold and purple; a somewhat similar robe, but of less ornate design, being given to me. Lastly, a silver sceptre was thrust into his hand, and into mine a plain wand. This sceptre was shaped like a crook, and the sight of it gave me some clue to the nature of the forthcoming ceremony.

"The crook of Osiris!" I whispered to Leo.

"Look here," he answered, "I don't want to impersonate any Egyptian god, nor to be mixed up in their heathen idolatries; in fact, I won't."

"Better go through with it," I suggested; "probably it is only something symbolical."

But Leo, who, notwithstanding the strange circumstances connected with his life, retained the religious principles in which I had educated him, very strongly indeed, refused to move an inch until the nature of this service was made clear to him. Indeed, he expressed himself upon the subject with vigour to Oros. At first the priest seemed puzzled what to do, then explained that the forthcoming ceremony was one of betrothal.

On learning this, Leo raised no further objections, asking only, with some nervousness, whether the Khania would be present. Oros answered "No," as she had already

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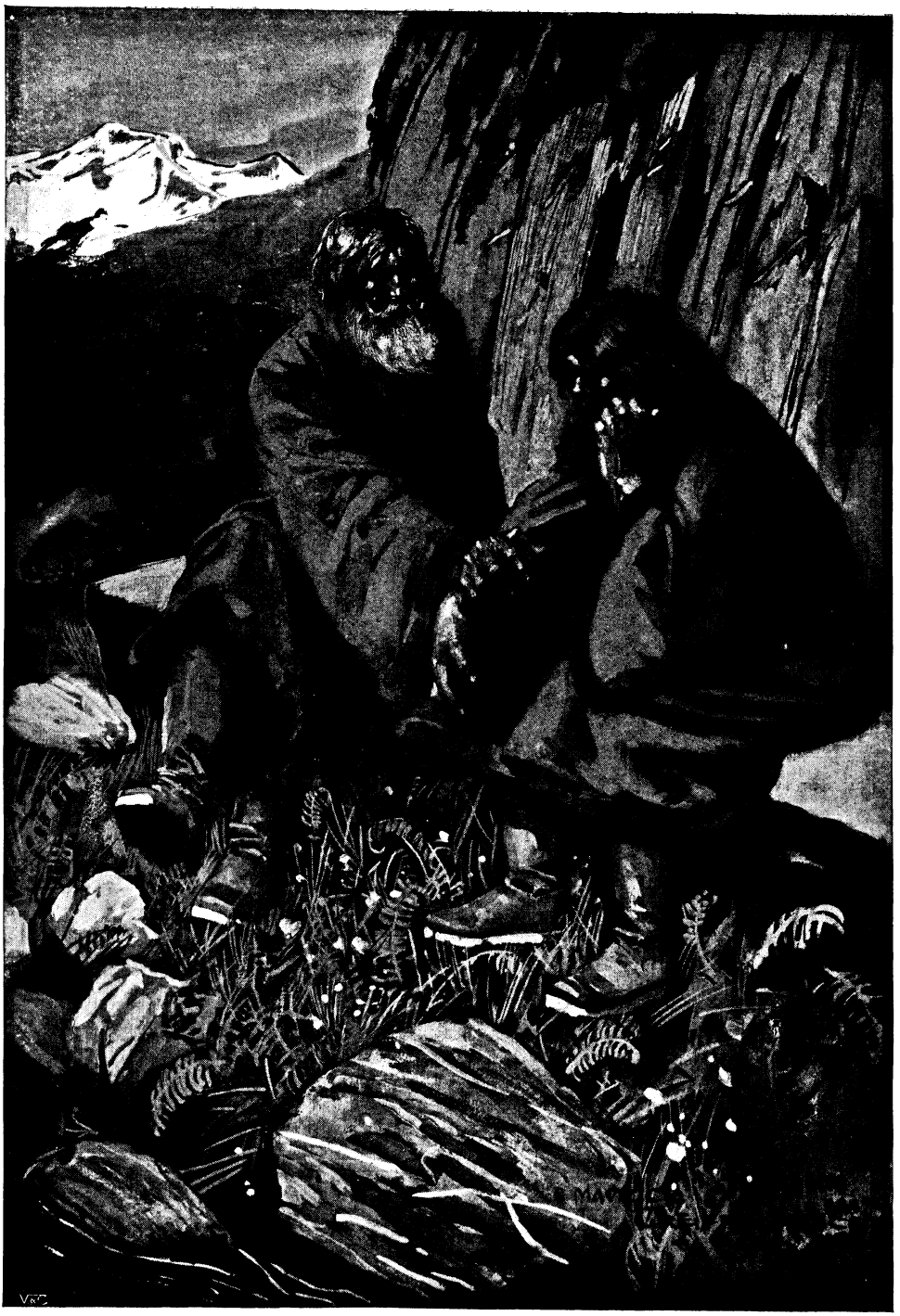

"'What have you to say, Horace?'"

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departed to Kaloon, vowing war and vengeance.

Then we were led through long passages, till finally we emerged into the gallery immediately in front of the great wooden doors of the apse. At our approach these swung open, and we entered it, Oros going first, then Leo, then myself, and following us, the procession of attendant priests.

As soon as our eyes became accustomed to the dazzling glare of the flaming pillars, we saw that some great rite was in progress in the temple, for in front of the divine statue of Motherhood, white-robed, and arranged in serried ranks, stood the company of the priests to the number of over two hundred, and behind these the company of the priestesses. Facing this congregation, and a little in advance of the two pillars of fire that flared on either side of the shrine, Ayesha herself was seated in a raised chair so that she could be seen of all, while to her right stood a similar chair, of which I could guess the purpose.

She was unveiled and gorgeously apparelled, though, save for the white beneath, her robes were those of a queen rather than of a priestess. About her radiant brow ran a narrow band of gold, whence rose the head of a hooded asp cut out of a single, crimson jewel, beneath which, in endless profusion, the glorious, waving hair flowed down and around, hiding even the folds of her purple cloak.

This cloak, opening in front, revealed an under-tunic of white silk cut low upon her bosom, and kept in place by a golden girdle, a double-headed snake, so like to that which "She" had worn in Kôr that it might have been the same. Her naked arms were bare of ornament, and in her right hand she held the jewelled sistrum set with its gems and bells.

No empress could have looked more royal, and no woman was ever half so lovely, for to Ayesha's human beauty was added a spiritual glory, her heritage alone. Seeing her, we could see naught else. The rhythmic movement of the bodies of the worshippers, the rolling grandeur of their chant of welcome echoed from the mighty roof, the fearful torches of living flame—all these things were lost on us. For there, new-born, enthroned, her arms stretched out in gracious welcome, sat that perfect and immortal woman, the appointed bride of one of us, the friend and lady of the other, her divine presence breathing power, mystery, and love.

On we marched between the ranks of hierophants, till Oros and the priests left us, and we stood alone face to face with Ayesha. Now she lifted her sceptre, and the chant ceased. In the midst of the following silence, she rose from her seat and, gliding down its steps, came to where Leo stood, and touched him on the forehead with her sistrum, crying in a loud, sweet voice—

"Behold the Chosen of the Hesea!" whereon all that audience echoed in a shout of thunder—

"Welcome to the Chosen of the Hesea!"

Then while the echoes of that glad cry yet rang round the rocky walls, Ayesha motioned to me to stand at her side, and taking Leo by the hand, drew him towards her, so that now he faced the white-robed company. Holding him thus, she began to speak in clear and silvery tones.

"Priests and priestesses of Hes, servants with her of the Mother of the world, hear me. Now for the first time I appear among you as I am, you who heretofore have looked but on a hooded shape, not knowing its form or fashion. Learn now the reason that I draw my veil. Ye see this man, whom ye believed a stranger that with his companion had wandered to our shrine. I tell you that he is no stranger; that of old, in lives forgotten, he was my lord who now comes to seek his love again. Say, is it not so, Kallikrates?"

"It is so," answered Leo.

"Priests and priestesses of Hes, as ye know, from the beginning it has been the right and custom of her who holds my place to choose one to be her lord. Is it not so?"

"It is so, O Hes," they answered.

She paused awhile; then, with a gesture of infinite sweetness, turned to Leo, bent towards him thrice, and slowly sank upon her knee.

"Say, thou," Ayesha said, looking up at him with her wondrous eyes, "say before these here gathered, and all those witnesses whom thou canst not see, dost thou again accept me as thy affianced bride?"

"Aye, Lady," he answered, in a deep but shaken voice, "now and for ever."

Then while all watched, in the midst of a great silence, Ayesha rose, cast down her sistrum sceptre that rang upon the rocky floor, and stretched out her arms towards him.

Leo also bent towards her and would have kissed her upon the lips. But I who watched saw his face grow white as it drew near to hers. While the radiance crept from her brow to his, turning his bright hair to gold, I saw also that this strong man trembled like a reed and seemed as though he were about to fall.

I think that Ayesha noted it too, for ere ever their lips met, she thrust him from her, and again that grey mist of fear gathered on her face.

In an instant it was gone. She had slipped from him, and with her hand held his hand as though to support him. Thus they stood till his feet grew firm and his strength returned.

Oros restored the sceptre to her, and lifting it, she said—

"O love and lord, take thou the place prepared for thee, where thou shalt sit for ever at my side, for with myself I give thee more than thou canst know or than I will tell thee now. Mount thy throne, O Affianced of Hes, and receive the worship of thy priests."

"Nay," he answered with a start, as that word fell upon his ears. "Here and now I say it once and for all. I am but a man who knows nothing of strange gods, their attributes and ceremonials. None shall bow the knee to me; and on earth, Ayesha, I bow mine to thee alone."

Now at this bold speech some of those who heard it looked astonished and whispered to each other, while a voice called—

"Beware, thou Chosen, of the anger of the Mother!"

Again for a moment Ayesha looked afraid; then, with a little laugh, swept the thing aside, saying—

"Surely with that I should be content. For me, O Love, thy adoration; for thee the betrothal song, no more."

So, having no choice, Leo mounted the throne, where notwithstanding his splendid presence, enhanced as it was by those glittering robes, he looked ill enough at ease—as, indeed, must any man of his faith and race. Happily, however, if some act of semi-idolatrous worship had been proposed, Ayesha found a means to prevent its celebration, and soon all such matters were forgotten both by the singers who sang, and we who listened to the majestic chant that followed.

Of its words, unfortunately, we were able to understand but little, both because of the volume of sound and of the secret, priestly language in which it was given, though its general purport could not be mistaken.

The female voices began it, singing very low, and conveying a strange impression of time and distance. Now followed bursts of gladness alternating with melancholy chords suggesting sighs and tears and sorrows long endured, and at the end a joyous, triumphant pæan thrown to and fro between the men and women singers, terminating in one united chorus repeated again and again, louder and yet louder, till it culminated in a veritable crash of melody, then of a sudden ceased.

Ayesha rose and waved her sceptre, whereon all the company bowed thrice; then turned and, breaking into some sweet, low chant that sounded like a lullaby, marched, rank after rank, across the width of the Sanctuary and through the carven doors, which closed behind the last of them.

When all had gone, leaving us alone, save for the priest Oros and the priestess Papave, who remained in attendance on their mistress, Ayesha, who sat gazing before her with dreaming, empty eyes, seemed to awake, for she rose and said—

"A noble chant, is it not, and an ancient? It was the wedding song of the feast of Isis and Osiris at Behbit in Egypt, and there I heard it before ever I saw the darksome Caves of Kôr. Often have I observed, my Holly, that music lingers longer than aught else in this changeful world, though it is rare that the very words should remain unvaried. Come, beloved—tell me, by what name shall I call thee? Thou art Kallikrates, and yet——"

"Call me Leo, Ayesha," he answered, "as I was christened in the only life of which I have any knowledge. This Kallikrates seems to have been an unlucky man, and the deeds he did, if in truth he was aught other than a tool in the hand of Destiny, have bred no good to the inheritors of his body—or his spirit, whichever it may be—or to those women with whom his life was intertwined. Call me Leo, then, for of Kallikrates I have had enough since that night when I looked upon the last of him in Kôr."

"Ah! I remember," she answered—"when thou sawest thyself lying in that narrow bed, and I sang thee a song, did I not, of the past and of the future? I can recall two lines of it; the rest I have forgotten—

"Onward, never weary, clad with splendour for a robe!
Till accomplished be our fate, and the night is rushing down.

"Yes, my Leo, now indeed we are 'clad with splendour for a robe,' and now our fate draws near to its accomplishment. Then perchance will come the downrushing of the night"; and she sighed, looked up tenderly, and said: "See, I am talking to thee in Arabic. Hast thou forgotten it?"

"No."

"Then let it be our tongue, for I love it best of all, who lisped it at my mother's knee. Now leave me here alone awhile; I would

think. Also," she added thoughtfully, and speaking with a strange and impressive inflexion of the voice, "there are some to whom I must give audience."

* * * * *

So we went, all of us supposing that Ayesha was about to receive a deputation of the Chiefs of the Mountain Tribes who came to felicitate her upon her betrothal.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE THIRD ORDEAL.

An hour, two hours passed, while we two strove to rest in our sleeping-place, but could not, for some influence disturbed us.

"Why does not Ayesha come?" asked Leo at length, pausing in his walk up and down the room. "I want to see her again; I cannot bear to be apart from her. I feel as though she were drawing me to her."

"How can I tell you? Ask Oros; he is outside the door."

So he went and asked him; but Oros only smiled and answered that the Hesea had not entered her chamber, so doubtless she must still remain in the Sanctuary.

"Then I am going to look for her. Come, Oros, and you too, Horace."

Oros bowed, but declined, saying that he was bidden to bide at our door, adding that we, "to whom all the paths were open," could return to the Sanctuary if we thought well.

"I do think well," replied Leo sharply. "Will you come, Horace, or shall I go alone?"

I hesitated. The Sanctuary was a public place, it is true, but Ayesha had said that she desired to be alone there for a while. Without more words, however, Leo shrugged his shoulders and started.

"You will never find your way," I said, and followed him.

We went down the long passages, that were dimly lighted with lamps, and came to the gallery. Here we found no lamps; still we groped our way to the great wooden doors. They were shut, but Leo pushed upon them impatiently, and one of them swung open a little, so that we could squeeze ourselves between them. As we passed, it closed noiselessly behind us.

Now we should have been in the Sanctuary, and in the full blaze of those awful columns of living fire. But they were out, or we had strayed elsewhere; at least, the darkness was intense. We tried to work our way back to the doors again, but could not. We were lost.

More, something oppressed us; we did not dare to speak. We went on a few paces and stopped, for we became aware that we were not alone. Indeed, it seemed to me that we stood in the midst of a thronging multitude, but not of men and women. Beings pressed about us; we could feel their robes, yet could not touch them; we could feel their breath, but it was *cold*. The air stirred all round us as they passed to and fro, passed in endless numbers. It was as though we had entered a cathedral filled with the vast congregation of all the dead who once had worshipped there. We grew afraid—my face was damp with fear, the hair stood up upon my head. We seemed to have wandered into a hall of the Shades.

At length light appeared far away, and we saw that it emanated from the two pillars of fire which burned on either side of the Shrine, that of a sudden had become luminous. So we were in the Sanctuary, and still near to the doors. Now those pillars were not bright; they were low and lurid; the rays from them scarcely reached us standing in the dense shadow.

But if we could not be seen in them, we still could see. Look! Yonder sat Ayesha on a throne, and oh! she was awful in her deathlike majesty. The blue light of the sunken columns played upon her, and in it she sat erect, with such a face and mien of pride as no human creature ever wore. Power seemed to flow from her; yes, it flowed from those wide-set, glittering eyes like light from jewels.

She seemed a Queen of Death receiving homage from the dead. More, she *was* receiving homage from dead or living—I know not which—for, as I thought it, a shadowy Shape arose before the throne and bent the knee to her, then another, and another, and another.

As each vague Being appeared and bowed its starry head, she raised her sceptre in answering salutation. We could hear the distant tinkle of the sistrum bells, the only sound in all that place; yes, and see her lips move, though no whisper reached us from them. Surely spirits were worshipping her!

We gripped each other. We shrank back and found the door. It gave to our push. Now we were in the passages again, and now we had reached our room.

At its entrance Oros was standing as we had left him. He greeted us with his fixed smile, taking no note of the terror written on

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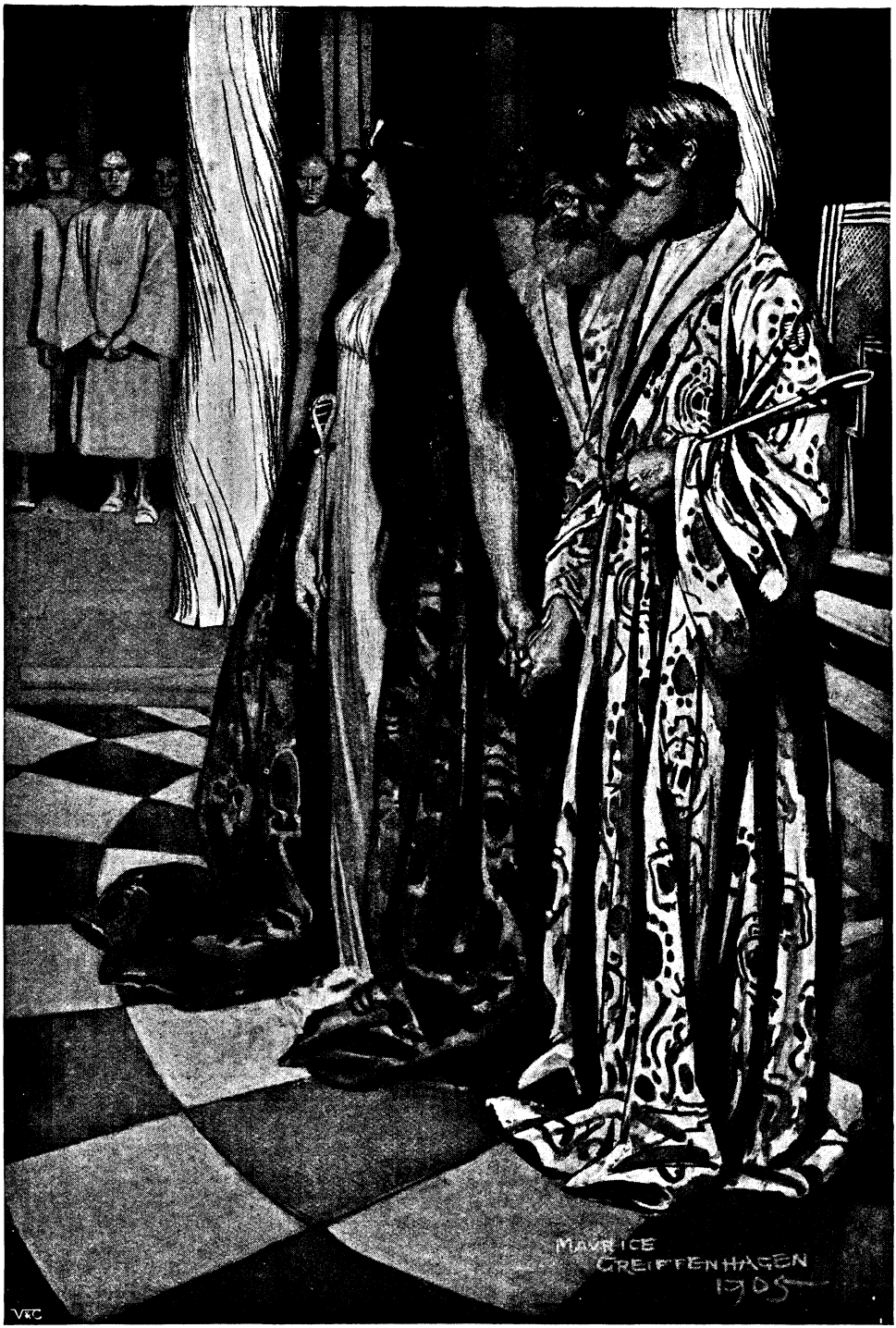

The betrothal.

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our faces. We passed him, and entering the room, stared at each other.

"What is she?" gasped Leo. "An angel?"

"Yes," I answered, "something of that sort." But to myself I thought that there are doubtless many kinds of angels.

"And what were those—those *shadows*—doing?" he asked again.

"Welcoming her after her transformation, I suppose. But perhaps they were not shadows—only priests disguised and conducting some secret ceremonial!"

Leo shrugged his shoulders, but made no other answer.

At length the door opened, and Oros, entering, said that the Hesea commanded our presence in her chamber.

So, still oppressed with fear and wonder—for what we had seen was perhaps more dreadful than anything that had gone before—we went, to find Ayesha seated and looking somewhat weary, but otherwise unchanged. With her was the priestess Papave, who had just unrobed her of the royal mantle which she wore in the Sanctuary.

Ayesha beckoned Leo to her, taking his hand and searching his face with her eyes, not without anxiety, as I thought.

Now I turned, purposing to leave them alone; but she saw, and said to me, smiling—

"Why wouldst thou forsake us, Holly? To go back to the Sanctuary once more?" and she looked at me with meaning in her glance. "Hast thou questions to ask of the statue of the Mother yonder, that thou lovest the place so much? They say it speaks, telling of the future to those who dare to kneel beside it uncompanioned from night till dawn. Yet I have often done so, but to me it has never spoken, though none long to learn the future more."

I made no answer, nor did she seem to expect any, for she went on at once—

"Nay, bide here, and let us have done with all sad and solemn thoughts. We three will sup together as of old, and for a while forget our fears and cares, and be happy as children who know not sin and death, nor that change which is death indeed. Oros, await my lord without. Papave, I will call thee later to disrobe me. Till then let none disturb us."

The room that Ayesha inhabited was not very large, as we saw by the hanging lamps with which it was lighted. It was plainly though richly furnished, the rock walls being covered with tapestries, and the tables and chairs inlaid with silver; but the only token that here a woman had her home was that about it stood several bowls of flowers. One of these, I remember, was filled with the delicate harebells I had admired, dug up roots and all, and set in moss.

"A poor place," said Ayesha, "yet better than that in which I dwelt those two thousand years awaiting thy coming, Leo; for see, beyond it is a garden, wherein I sit," and she sank down upon a couch by the table, motioning to us to take our places opposite to her.

The meal was simple; for us, eggs boiled hard and cold venison; for her, milk, some little cakes of flour, and mountain berries.

Presently Leo threw off his gorgeous, purple-broidered robe, which he still wore, and cast upon a chair the crook-headed sceptre that Oros had again thrust into his hand. Ayesha smiled as he did so, saying—

"It would seem that thou holdest these sacred emblems in but small respect."

"Very small," he answered. "Thou heardest my words in the Sanctuary, Ayesha; so let us make a pact. Thy religion I do not understand, but I understand my own, and not even for thy sake will I take part in what I hold to be idolatry."

Now I thought that she would be angered by this plain speaking, but she only bowed her head and answered meekly—

"Thy will is mine, Leo, though it will not be easy always to explain thy absence from the ceremonies in the Temple. Yet thou hast a right to thine own faith, which doubtless is mine also."

"How can that be?" he asked, looking up.

"Because all great Faiths are the same, changed a little to suit the needs of passing times and peoples. What taught that of Egypt, which, in a fashion, we still follow here? That hidden in a multitude of manifestations, one Power, great and good, rules all the universes: that the holy shall inherit a life eternal, and the vile, eternal death: that men shall be shaped and judged by their own deeds, and here and hereafter drink of the cup which they have brewed: that their real home is not on earth, but beyond the earth, where all riddles shall be answered and all sorrow cease. Say, dost thou believe these things, as I do?"

"Aye, Ayesha; but Hes or Isis is thy goddess, for hast thou not told us tales of thy dealings with her in the past, and did we not hear thee make thy prayer to her? Who, then, is this goddess Hes?"

"Know, Leo, that she is what I named her—Nature's soul; no divinity, but the

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secret Spirit of the World; that universal Motherhood whose symbol thou hast seen yonder, and in whose mysteries lie hid all earthly life and knowledge."

"Does, then, this merciful Motherhood follow her votaries with death and evil, as thou sayest she has followed thee for thy disobedience, and me—and another—because of some unnatural vows broken long ago?" Leo asked quietly.

Resting her arm upon the table, Ayesha looked at him with sombre eyes and answered—

"In that Faith of thine of which thou speakest are there perchance two gods, each having many ministers: a god of good and a god of evil, an Osiris and a Set?"

He nodded.

"I thought it. And the god of ill is strong, is he not, and can put on the shape of good? Tell me, then, Leo, in the world that is to-day, whereof I know so little, hast thou ever heard of frail souls who for some earthly bribe have sold themselves to that evil one, or to his minister, and been paid their price in bitterness and anguish?"

"All wicked folk do as much in this form or in that," he answered.

"And if once there lived a woman who was mad with the thirst for beauty, for life, for wisdom, and for love, might she not—oh! might she not perchance——"

"Sell herself to the god called Set, or one of his angels? Ayesha, dost thou mean"—and Leo rose, speaking in a voice that was full of fear—"that thou art such a woman?"

"And if so?" she asked, also rising and drawing slowly near to him.

"If so," he answered hoarsely, "if so, I think that perhaps we had best fulfil our fates apart——"

"Ah!" she said, with a little scream of pain as though a knife had stabbed her, "wouldst thou away to Atene? I tell thee that thou canst not leave me. I have power—above all men thou shouldst know it, whom once I slew. Nay, thou hast no memory, poor creature of a breath, and I—I remember too well. I will not hold thee dead again—I'll hold thee living. Look now on my beauty, Leo"—and she bent her swaying form towards him, compelling him with her glorious, alluring eyes—"and begone if thou canst. Why, thou drawest nearer to me. Man, that is not the path of flight.

"Nay, I will not tempt thee with these common lures. Go, Leo, if thou wilt. Go, my love, and leave me to my loneliness and my sin. Now—at once. Atene will shelter thee till spring, when thou canst cross the mountains and return to thine own world again, and to those things of common life which are thy joy. See, Leo, I veil myself, that thou mayst not be tempted," and she flung the corner of her cloak about her head, then asked a sudden question through it—

"Didst thou not but now return to the Sanctuary with Holly after I bade thee leave me there alone? Methought I saw the two of you standing by its doors."

"Yes, we came to seek thee," he answered.

"And found more than ye sought, as often chances to the bold—is it not so? Well, I willed that ye should come and see, and protected you where others might have died."

"What didst thou there upon the throne, and whose were those forms which we saw bending before thee?" he asked coldly.

"I have ruled in many shapes and lands, Leo. Perchance they were ancient companions and servitors of mine come to greet me once again and to hear my tidings. Or perchance they were but shadows of thy brain, pictures like those upon the fire, that it pleased me to summon to thy sight, to try thy strength and constancy.

"Leo Vincey, know now the truth: that all things are illusions, even that there exists no future and no past, that what has been and what shall be already *is* eternally. Know that I, Ayesha, am but a magic wraith, foul when thou seest me foul, fair when thou seest me fair; a spirit-bubble reflecting a thousand lights in the sunshine of thy smile, grey as dust and gone in the shadow of thy frown. Think of the throned Queen before whom the shadowy Powers bowed, and worship, for that is I. Think of the hideous, withered Thing thou sawest naked on the rock, and flee away, for that is I. Or keep me lovely, and adore, knowing all evil centred in my spirit, for that is I. Now, Leo, thou hast the truth. Put me from thee for ever and for ever if thou wilt, and be safe; or clasp me, clasp me to thy heart, and in payment for my lips and love take my sin upon thy head! Nay, Holly, be thou silent, for now he must judge alone."

Leo turned, as I thought, at first, to find the door. But it was not so, for he did but walk up and down the room awhile. Then he came back to where Ayesha stood, and spoke quite simply and in a very quiet voice, such as men of his nature often assume in moments of great emotion.

"Ayesha," he said, "when I saw thee as

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thou wast, aged and—thou knowest how—I clung to thee. Now, when thou hast told me the secret of this unholy pact of thine, when with my eyes, at least, I have seen thee reigning a mistress of spirits good or ill, yet I cling to thee. Let thy sin, great or little —whate'er it is—be my sin also. In truth, I feel its weight sink to my soul and become a part of me; and although I have no vision or power of prophecy, I am sure that I shall not escape its punishment. Well, though I be innocent, let me bear it for thy sake. I am content."

Ayesha heard, the cloak slipped from her head, and for a moment she stood silent like one amazed, then burst into a passion of sudden tears. Down she went before him, and clinging to his garments, she bowed her stately shape until her forehead touched the ground. Yes, that proud being, who was more than mortal, whose nostrils but now had drunk the incense of the homage of ghosts or spirits, humbled herself at this man's feet.

With an exclamation of horror, half-maddened at the piteous sight, Leo sprang to one side, then stooping, lifted and led her still weeping to the couch.

"Thou knowest not what thou hast done," Ayesha said at last. "Let all thou sawest on the Mountain's crest or in the Sanctuary be but visions of the night; let that tale of an offended goddess be a parable, a fable, if thou wilt. This at least is true, that ages since, I sinned for thee and against thee and another; that ages since, I bought beauty and life indefinite wherewith I might win thee and endow thee at a cost which few would dare; that I have paid interest on the debt, in mockery, utter loneliness, and daily pain which scarce could be endured, until the bond fell due at last and must be satisfied.

"Yes, how I may not tell thee, thou and thou alone stoodst between me and the full discharge of this most dreadful debt—for know that in mercy it is given to us to redeem one another."

Now he would have spoken, but with a motion of her hand she bade him be silent, and continued—

"See now, Leo; three great dangers has thy body passed of late upon its journey to my side: the Death-hounds, the Mountains, and the Precipice. Know that these were but types and ordained foreshadowings of the last threefold trial of thy soul. From the pursuing passions of Atene, which must have undone us both, thou hast fled victorious. Thou hast endured the desert loneliness of the sands and snows, starving for a comfort that never came. Even when the avalanche thundered round thee, thy faith stood fast, as it stood above the Pit of flame, while after bitter years of doubt a rushing flood of horror swallowed up thy hopes. As thou didst descend the glacier's steep, not knowing what lay beneath that fearful path, so but now of thine own choice, for very love of me, thou hast plunged headlong into an abyss that is deeper far, to share its terrors with my spirit. Dost thou understand at last?"

"Something; not all, I think," he answered slowly.

"Surely thou art wrapped in a double veil of blindness," she cried impatiently. "Listen again:

"Hadst thou yielded to Nature's crying and rejected me but yesterday, in that foul shape I must perchance have lingered for uncounted time, playing the poor part of priestess of a forgotten faith. This was the first temptation, the ordeal of thy flesh—nay, not the first—the second, for Atene and her lurings were the first. But thou wast loyal, and in the magic of thy conquering love my beauty and my womanhood were re-born.

"Hadst thou rejected me to-night, when, as I was bidden to do, I showed thee that vision in the Sanctuary and confessed to thee my soul's black crime, then hopeless and helpless, unshielded by my earthly power, I must have wandered on into the deep and endless night of solitude. This was the third appointed test, the trial of thy spirit; and by thy steadfastness, Leo, thou hast loosed the hand of Destiny from about my throat. Now I am regenerate in thee—through thee may hope again for some true life beyond, which thou shalt share. And yet, and yet, if thou shouldst suffer, as well may chance——"

"Then I suffer, and there's an end," broke in Leo serenely. "Save for a few things, my mind is clear, and there must be justice for us all at last. If I have broken the bond that bound thee, if I have freed thee from some threatening, spiritual ill by taking a risk upon my head, well, I have not lived and, if need be, shall not die in vain. So let us have done with all these problems; or, rather, first answer thou me one. Ayesha, how wast thou changed upon that peak?"

"In flame I left thee, Leo, and in flame I did return, as in flame, mayhap, we shall

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"A shadowy Shape arose before the throne and bent the knee to her."

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both depart. Or perhaps the change was in the eyes of all of you who watched, and not in this shape of mine. I have answered. Seek to learn no more."

"One thing I do still seek to learn. Ayesha, we were betrothed to-night. When wilt thou marry me?"

"Not yet, not yet," she answered hurriedly, her voice quivering as she spoke. "Leo, thou must put that hope from thy thoughts awhile, and for some few months, a year perchance, be content to play the part of friend and lover."

"Why so?" he asked with bitter disappointment. "Ayesha, those parts have been mine for many a day; more, I grow no younger, and, unlike thee, shall soon be old. Also, life is fleeting, and sometimes I think that I near its end."

"Speak no such evil-omened words!" she said, springing from the couch and stamping her sandalled foot upon the ground in anger born of fear. "Yet thou sayest truth: thou art unfortified against the accidents of time and chance. Oh! horrible, horrible! thou mightest die again, and leave me living!"

"Then give me of thy life, Ayesha."

"That would I gladly, all of it, couldst thou but repay me with the boon of death to come.

"Oh, ye poor mortals!" she went on with a sudden burst of passion; "ye beseech your gods for the gift of many years, being ignorant that ye would sow a seed within your breasts whence ye must garner ten thousand miseries. Know ye not that this world is indeed the wide house of hell, in whose chambers from time to time the spirit tarries a little while, then, weary and aghast, speeds wailing to the peace that it has won.

"Think, then, what it is to live on here eternally and yet be human; to age in soul and see our beloved die and pass to lands whither we cannot hope to follow; to wait while drop by drop the curse of the long centuries falls upon our imperishable being, like water slow dripping on a diamond that it cannot wear, till they be born anew, forgetful of us, and again sink from our helpless arms into the void unknowable.

"Think what it is to see the sins we sin, the tempting look, the word idle or unkind—aye, even the selfish thought or struggle—multiplied ten thousandfold and more eternal than ourselves, spring up upon the universal bosom of the earth to be the bane of a million destinies, whilst the everlasting Finger writes its endless count, and a cold voice of Justice cries in our conscience-haunted solitude: 'Oh, soul unshriven! behold the ripening harvest thy wanton hand did scatter, and long in vain for the waters of forgetfulness!'

"Think what it is to have every earthly wisdom, yet to burn unsatisfied for the deeper and forbidden draught; to gather up all wealth and power and let them slip again, like children weary of a painted toy; to sweep the lyre of fame, and, maddened by its jangling music, to stamp it small beneath our feet; to snatch at pleasure's goblet and find its wine is sand; and at length, outworn, to cast us down and pray the pitiless gods with whose stolen garment we have wrapped ourselves, to take it back again, and suffer us to slink naked to the grave!

"Such is the life thou askest, Leo. Say, wilt thou have it now?"

"If it may be shared with thee," he answered. "These woes are born of loneliness, but then our perfect fellowship would turn them into joy."

"Aye," she said, "while it was permitted to endure. So be it, Leo. In the spring, when the snows melt, we will journey together to Libya, and there thou shalt be bathed in the Fount of Life, that forbidden Essence of which once thou didst fear to drink. Afterwards I will wed thee."

"That place is closed for ever, Ayesha."

"Not to my feet and thine," she answered. "Fear not, my love. Were this mountain heaped thereon, I would blast a path through it with mine eyes and lay its secret bare. Oh! would that thou wast as I am, for then before to-morrow's sun we'd watch the rolling pillar thunder by, and thou shouldst taste its glory.

"But it may not be. Hunger or cold can starve thee, and waters drown; swords can slay thee, or sickness sap away thy strength. Had it not been for the false Atene, who disobeyed my words, as it was foredoomed that she should do, by this day we were across the mountains, or had travelled northward through the frozen desert and the rivers. Now we must await the melting of the snows, for winter is at hand, and in it, as thou knowest, no man can live upon their heights."

"Eight months till April before we can start, and how long to cross the mountains, and all the vast distances beyond, and the seas and the swamps of Kôr? Why, at the best, Ayesha, two years must go by before we can even find the place"; and he fell

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"'Ayesha, dost thou mean that thou art such a woman?'"

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to entreating her to let them be wed at once and journey afterwards.

But she said, Nay, and nay, and nay, it should not be; till at length, as though fearing his pleading, or that of her own heart, she rose and dismissed us.

"Ah, my Holly!" she said to me, as we three parted, "I promised thee and myself some few hours of rest and of the happiness of quiet, and thou seest how my desire has been fulfilled. Those old Egyptians were wont to share their feasts with one grizzly skeleton, but here I counted four to-night that you both could see, and they are named Fear, Suspense, Foreboding, and Love-denied. Doubtless also, when these are buried, others will come to haunt us and snatch the poor morsel from our lips.

"So hath it ever been with me, whose feet misfortune dogs. Yet I hope on, and now many a barrier lies behind us; and Leo, thou hast been tried in the appointed triple fires, and yet proved true. Sweet be thy slumbers, O my love, and sweeter still thy dreams, for know, my soul shall share them! I vow to thee that to-morrow we'll be happy—aye, to-morrow without fail."

* * * * *

"Why will she not marry me at once?" asked Leo, when we were alone in our chamber.

"Because she is afraid," I answered.

(*To be continued.*)

A WEED.

THE remnant of a Roman villa, strown
With English leaves, from straggling chances screened;
Labelled with rust-crowned letters; and, grey-grown,
An elm, on whose bole many a lance has leaned.

Pomp's empty nest! Shrunk vault where stood the shrine!
Here linger, worldling! Warrior weary, read!
Lo, in this frame of iron, a word divine
Shines on the shattered tesseræ—a weed!

CHARLES INNISS BOWEN.

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ARMAND—AU REVOIR!

By L. G. MOBERLY.*

I WAS an unwilling witness of that most idyllic of love scenes in a garden that was in itself an idyll. Most gladly would I have shown myself to the two young things unconscious of my presence, but it seemed to me less cruel to remain quietly in the little pergola overhung with masses of wisteria and banksia roses in full flower, than to break out upon them, to their embarrassment and annoyance.

The chance which had brought me to sit that morning in the fragrant little pergola helped to form the first link in the chain of coincidences that gave me a knowledge of those two other lives—lives which never touched my own, yet into whose innermost recesses I had such strange glimpses.

The murmur of voices from the path, immediately outside the entrance to the pergola, was the first intimation I received that someone besides myself had discovered this fragrant corner of that most lovely garden.

It was a man's voice that spoke first, in French, eager, impetuous, and, as I imagined, youthful.

"Beloved," he said, "is it true? Are you sure? Will love be enough?"

"Enough?" The answer evidently came from a girl; the tones were so fresh, so clear, but with a penetrating sweetness in them which gave me the certainty that a woman's soul, strong and loving, lay behind that clear, young voice. "If you knew how glad—how glad I am that I am free to choose love, to follow my heart! Love is enough."

The last words were very simply said, but they held a depth of meaning that made my foolish old heart give a leap of sympathy.

Love?—enough?

Yes, surely, in a world that sang of love and youth: where the spring sunlight touched the vine leaves into vivid green; where the birds sang even amongst the dark cypresses; where the scent of the pale wisteria flowers and of the banksia roses round me filled the soft air with fragrance.

"Love is enough," she repeated, "with you, Armand."

"But you give up so much," he said doubtfully. "I take everything; the sacrifice is all yours."

"Sacrifice!" she cried, a ring of glad pride in her voice. "Do you think I care for rank and all that rank brings? I am glad I was born too late to have to wear a crown that is so thorny—so thorny," she repeated almost dreamily. "I am free to give myself to you. Sacrifice?" she laughed softly. "There is no sacrifice in going into Paradise."

As she spoke those words, the two paused in their walk along the path, and through the delicate wisteria and banksia leaves I caught a glimpse of them both.

They were young, but there was no immaturity or lack of purpose in either face.

The man's glowed with strong feeling, his eyes never left the face of the girl by his side. In height she was almost his equal, and the eyes she turned on him were nearly on a level with his own. Turned thus, I could see her features perfectly, and every one of them was indelibly printed on my memory, never again to be forgotten.

Her eyes were blue as the deep sky, glimpses of which I could catch through the waving leaves above me; they shone with a love-light which might well have made proud the man for whom they shone; her delicately cut nose and well-formed mouth bore the stamp of high breeding, the colouring of her cheeks was dainty as the apple blossom in the meadow beyond the garden; the sunlight gleaming in her hair wove it into a coronet of gold. She moved with the stately tread of a young queen; yet as she looked at the man, there was a beautiful surrender in her eyes, and a tremulous smile played about her mouth.

He took her hand in his with a sort of reverence and, stooping his dark head, kissed it tenderly. Looking at him, I felt that he was worthy of the love even of such a woman as this. His face was strong, yet gentle; there was no weakness in the firm mouth, nothing

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but purity and manliness in the straightforward glance.

"Beloved," he said, and his voice shook, "will you never regret all that you will lose if you come into Paradise with me?"

"Never," she said quietly. "To enter Paradise with you, Armand, that is enough." And she turned her beautiful face to his and let him kiss her softly on the lips.

I caught my breath as they turned away. I found my eyes instinctively watching for the last glimpse of her white gown as it vanished amongst the trees. I smiled at this sunny picture of youth and joy.

"They are worthy of each other," I said.

* * * * *

Standing that evening on the terrace of the hotel watching a rose-coloured sunset behind the great pile of Monte Rosa, I saw the girl again. She was walking across the garden, an elderly lady on one side of her, the young man on the other.

"Do you see that girl?" a hotel acquaintance asked eagerly.

I nodded.

"She is a great personage, in spite of her simple dress and manners. She is the Princess Theresa, daughter of" (and he named the king of a well-known and flourishing little kingdom). "But for the fate which has given her two elder sisters, she would be heir to the throne; she has no brothers. As it is, I fancy it looks as if she intended to renounce all regal rights and be happy in her own way with the young fellow beside her."

I also fancied that she had found a road to happiness more royal perhaps than any beaten track along which convention might have led her. But I said nothing, only watched that white-clad figure bathed in the rosy sunset light, and smiled, remembering how she had entered to-day into her Paradise.

* * * * *

Two years later, as I was journeying homewards from a long tour in the East, which had taken me far out of reach of all newspapers or tidings of the Western world, I resolved to stay for a night or two in a town on my route which, it so happened, was the capital of that kingdom where the Princess Theresa's father reigned as king.

My thoughts naturally enough flew back to her as I drove through the quaint and picturesque town, and a vivid picture of her as I had last seen her rose before my eyes. The fragrant garden, the great snow mountains, the rosy sunset light upon her beautiful, glad face—all these flashed before me, shutting out for a moment the busy streets, the thronging people; and I wondered whether she and Armand were happy together, far away from cities and conventionality, and from the trammels of royalty and Court etiquette. As I drove on, I was roused from my musings by the increasing crowds, and I now became aware that the streets were gaily decorated with flags and flowers, and that people's faces wore an unusual look of festivity and rejoicing.

"What is happening?" I asked of my driver. "Is this a national festival, or the anniversary of some great victory?"

He laughed good-humouredly.

"The gentleman does not know?" he said. "Our Princess is to be married to-morrow—the Crown Princess, the heir to the throne, be it understood," he went on for the further enlightenment of my dull foreign understanding. "She marries our neighbour, Prince Frederick, and we rejoice."

"So," I reflected, "the Princess Theresa's eldest sister was to be married, and no doubt the younger Princess herself would be at the wedding." I then and there resolved that I would make at least an effort to see something of the morrow's ceremony.

The town was astir betimes, and I was astir with the town to take my place as near as might be to the steps of the fine cathedral in which I learnt the wedding was to take place. I found a small crowd already there, and by the time fixed for the ceremony the crowd had grown to a big one; but it was gay and good-natured, and determined to make the most of the holiday and of the wedding of a princess who was plainly most deeply loved.

I found myself well amused watching the guests stream into the building, listening to the comments of the populace, and learning from my neighbours who was this grandee, and who that. Then at last a murmur ran round: "The royal household is coming!" and I craned forward with the rest to watch the lords and ladies in waiting pass up the steps. Once I started violently, for I saw a face I knew, but a face grown from youth to manhood since I had seen it last—the face of the man called Armand. And, as well as the youth, all the gladness had gone out of it; it was strong and pure as ever, but infinitely sad; and I wondered.

Next there came a pause, then a blare of trumpets, a great shout from the multitude, a pealing volume of sound from the organ, and out of a magnificent state carriage, into

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"He took her hand in his with a sort of reverence and, stooping his dark head, kissed it tenderly."

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the sunshine on the steps, there came, leaning on the old king's arm, a tall form in trailing white garments, her diamonds flashing till she seemed to move in a blaze of light.

And when I saw the face of the bride, I caught my breath and uttered a low exclamation, for the face under the bridal veil was not the face of a stranger. I looked once again upon the face of the girl I had seen walking with her lover in the garden at sunset time—the girl who had entered into Paradise with Armand!

The same, yet not the same! The exquisite contour was there still; the eyes, blue and deep as the sky overhead; the beautiful curves of mouth and chin; the gleaming hair. But the colouring, instead of making me think of apple blossoms in spring, was white, white as a statue; and the radiance was all gone! The face was set and still as though carved out of marble, lovely beyond words, but cold with a coldness that froze my heart.

She passed into the building with that free, stately step I remembered, then I turned with a question to a man behind me.

"Yes—that is the Crown Princess now. Her elder sisters both died. Yes—it was sad, very sad. They said the young Princess Theresa had been about to resign her royal rank, to wed for love; but—her sisters had died, and she had become her father's heir—and—well, of course, it was easily to be seen that she must wed the son of a royal house," and so on, and so on.

I waited to hear no more. I could not bear to see that beautiful cold face again, nor the heart-break I had noted in her eyes: I struggled out of the seething crowd, away from the sound of the pealing organ, but I could not escape from the thought of those two, at the door of whose Paradise an angel stood, bearing a flaming sword in his hand.

* * * * *

It was a tiny churchyard on a hillside in Switzerland. Below it the waters of the lake shimmered in the sunshine, above its terraces rose vineyard above vineyard, till they were lost in the woods that hung upon the sides of the great brooding mountains. I walked slowly along the little paths among the graves, reading the names of the dead who lay in their peaceful resting-place amongst the roses. For round the graves on every hand, and over the grey stone terraces, and along the steep little paths, were roses—roses everywhere, pink and red, orange and pale yellow, snowy white and deepest crimson. Their fragrance filled the air, their petals strewed the ground at my feet.

All at once my slow steps were arrested; a few feet in front of me I saw a woman in black and alone, kneeling beside a grave over which was a trelliswork covered with white banksia roses. For a few moments she knelt there very quietly, then she rose and, stooping over the grave, picked a bunch of the white blossoms and, when she had done so, laid them against her lips.

Something in the eloquent little gesture brought a lump into my throat; and when I saw the tall form turn away and come along the path towards me, I instinctively moved into the grass beside the pathway. She passed me quickly, but her free yet stately tread made me catch my breath and steal one glimpse at her face.

Yes, oh, yes, there was no mistaking her beautiful features. Though years had gone by, they had not dimmed her loveliness; and though her eyes shone through a mist of tears, their colour was still the same wonderful deep blue. But her face was more than beautiful. The promise of the Princess Theresa's girlhood had been fulfilled in her womanhood; strength, sweetness, purity—these looked out of the face I saw, as she passed swiftly along the path between the roses, the bunch of pure white blossoms in her hand.

Deeply moved, I stood motionless long after her figure had vanished from my sight into the road below, where, as I now remembered, I had seen a carriage in waiting. When I roused myself at last, it was to go slowly along the path by which she had come, to pause at last beside the little grave over which the banksia roses bloomed so lavishly.

The grave was marked only by a simple stone. No date was upon it; no text; there were no wreaths upon the simple grass plot. Only it was wrapped about by the trailing branches of the rose, whose petals had made a pure white mantle upon the grass; and the three words upon the little stone seemed to me the most pathetic I had ever read—

"Armand—au revoir!"

* * * * *

I have seen her once since then, a crowned queen and her people's idol. She was driving along the streets of her capital, her little son by her side; she was dressed all in white, and her loveliness was something to

"She passed into the building with that free, stately step."

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dream of and remember. I thought I had never seen a smile more infinitely sweet; and yet the sadness in her eyes brought a mist before my own. For a moment the street, the people about me, the swiftly rolling carriage, faded from my sight. Instead I saw a far-away garden, fragrant with the scent of pale wisteria flowers and banksia roses; radiant with sunshine, full of the songs of birds—the glory of spring. I saw the face of a girl, glad with a wonderful new gladness; I heard a voice, the most soft and musical it has ever been my lot to hear before or since, say gently—

"To enter Paradise with you, Armand, that is enough!"

The vision faded, another took its place.

A hillside cemetery; the deep, still lake, the brooding mountains—"roses, roses all the way"—and a little grave amongst them, a grave whose simple stone bears only those three short words—

"*Armand—au revoir!*"

"She picked a bunch of white blossoms and laid them against her lips."

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CONCERNING C[illegible]NESS

BY A BOY WHO VALUES IT.

"My father, for some reason he might perhaps be able to explain himself, thought proper to laugh at me."

ANYONE who has read my account of the disaster consequent on an outbreak of influenza at our school last Christmas term is not likely to have forgotten it. I know I have a power of vivid description possessed by few chaps of my age. I have tested it by describing to my female relations the damage we do to each other's shins at football, and the result was all that could be desired; therefore, it would be mere affectation on my part to pretend ignorance of the fact that I can tell a thing in a manner calculated to keep it fresh in the memory.

Further preamble is unnecessary.

It will not be wondered at that I burned to do something which would enable me to stand up before Dowson and repeat the whole set of "sucks" straight off, with appropriate gestures. With such an incentive, I felt that I had it in me to achieve great things; and I pestered my relations to let me go in for a scholarship offered by a school which, for purposes of secrecy, I shall proceed to call St. Matthew's. That is not its right name; so, no matter what I say, it can't bring an action for libel against me. (I think it well to mention this, in case the Editor should be nervous.)

Well, I said I would go in for this examination, and, of my own free will, I offered to swat in the holidays; but my father, for some reason he might perhaps be able to explain himself (but, also, he might not), thought proper to laugh at me. I regret to say he sometimes appears to be without any sense of the fitness of things, and allows himself to be led beyond "the limits of becoming mirth" by an unseemly liking for jokes, of which I am the butt. He said I had an uncommonly good opinion of myself—an absurd statement, which I did not think it worth while to deny—and asked me if I was aware that the scholarship was open to boys nearly three years older than I was.

I said I didn't care a broken hockey-stick; I wanted to try.

He said: "All right; try away. And, if

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you get it," he said, "you needn't talk about broken hockey-sticks. I'll give you the best one in——" (He named a local repository, which I had better not mention, lest I should be wrongfully accused of a desire to advertise it.)

His remark put a good idea into my head. I saw at once that a great deal more might be got out of that enterprise than the scholarship itself and the crow over Dowson, and I immediately set to work in a business-like fashion, and went round the family making bargains. By the time I had gone through my nearest relations, I had been promised, not only the new hockey-stick, but a really good bow (I named the price myself) and arrows; a sovereign; and a day in town with a theatre of my own choosing thrown in. You see, no one believed I had a chance of the scholarship, so they promised rather wildly and rashly. The same sort of thing happened once before, when I realised a small fortune by getting four prizes all together, having made some one-sided bets carefully in advance; but it seems to me that even quite old people, like one's parents, are never able to profit by their experiences. Of this, however, I have no cause to complain.

"A day in town with a theatre of my own choosing thrown in."

I got jolly tired of swatting before the holidays were over, but I wasn't going to give in. There was too much at stake for that. The examination was to stretch over five blessed days at the beginning of term. The papers for the written work were sent down to the Head, and I was shut up in a room by myself for six hours, messing with ink. At least, it wasn't quite by myself, for the rule is that there has to be a master posted on guard. I suppose that's for fear of cribbing—just as if any decent boy would crib!

After the first day's writing, I was so stiff I could scarcely crawl home, and my father, with his usual frivolity, said that he could supply a quotation from Charles Kingsley to meet my case. I was green enough to ask what it was, and he said: "Of sitting, as of all earthly pleasures, in the end there cometh satiety"—or some rot like that. I thought him unfeeling; but, as I had done a better day's work than I expected, I was in good spirits, and it didn't seem worth while to get up a grievance.

The second and third day I overheard two of the masters whispering about a tremendous strain. I thought at first that it was some fellow's ankle at hockey; but after a while it occurred to me that they were talking about me, and I thought I might as well have some fun out of it. I wasn't really feeling strained a bit. A fellow doesn't, you see, if he knows his work. It is when he isn't sure of himself that the strain comes in. As a matter of

fact, I was enjoying the whole affair immensely; but I thought it would only be kind to give the masters the satisfaction of imagining they were right. Nothing is lost by a little bit of good nature of that sort. Accordingly, on the fourth day I became eccentric. I asked for a cushion, and I got it. I asked for the masters' special soda-water at dinner, and I got it. It really seemed as if no one could do enough for me, and they wouldn't even notice that I was taking liberties on account of the strain; but I was determined to make them. So, that evening, when the Head came to take up my last papers, I looked at him with a countenance as nearly blank as I could make it, and said: "Please, sir, why is a wren like a whale?"

"I don't know," said he in a very uncomfortable sort of voice. "Do you know yourself?"

"Yes, sir," said I. "Because there's a 'b' in 'both.'"

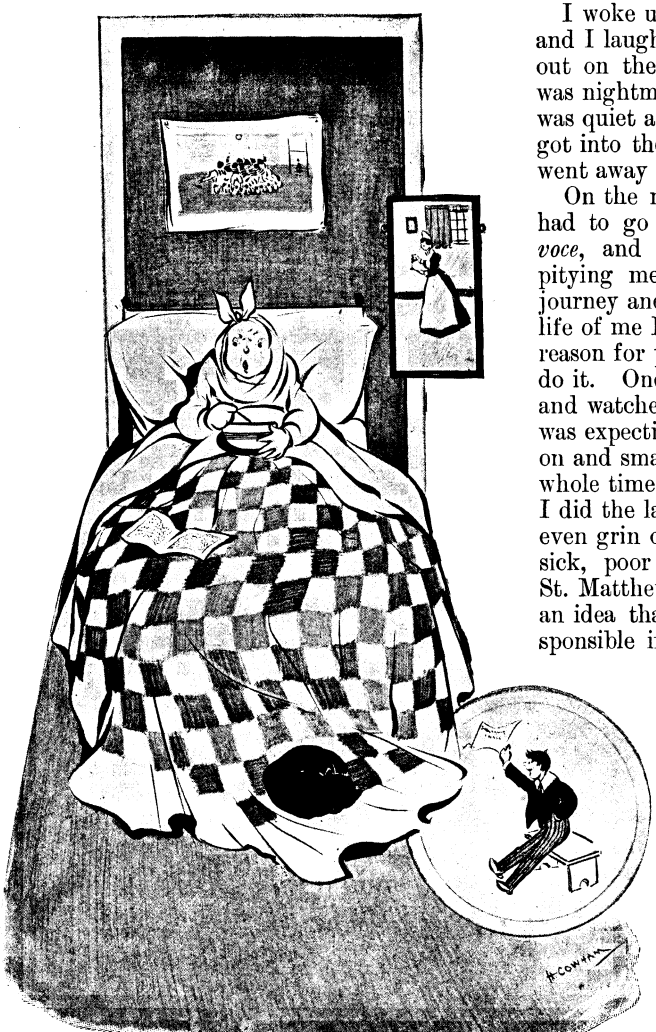
He went out of the room with the papers in a great hurry, and I heard someone in the passage saying very excitedly: "Bound to break down. If he belonged to me, I shouldn't let him finish. I'd take him home and put him to bed. Brain fever . . ."

The voice trailed away into the distance, and it was a blessing no one came in just then, for I was doubled up so tight I couldn't have straightened myself.

I woke up in the night and thought of it; and I laughed so much that I nearly rolled out on the floor. My relations thought it was nightmare, and came in to see; but I was quiet and steady by the time they had got into their dressing-gowns, and they too went away muttering about strain.

On the next day, which was the fifth, I had to go up to St. Matthew's for a *vivâ voce*, and I could see that everyone was pitying me awfully. There was a railway journey and lots of excitement, and for the life of me I couldn't see that there was any reason for pitying myself. Anyway, I didn't do it. One of the masters came with me, and watched me as if I was an egg and he was expecting me to roll off whatever I was on and smash. I was laughing at him the whole time; but he didn't know it, because I did the laughing all inside me, and didn't even grin on the outside. He looked quite sick, poor chap, by the time we got to St. Matthew's. I fancy he must have had an idea that the Head would hold him responsible if I failed. I wanted awfully to say "Buck up!" or "Nil desperandum!" or something encouraging of that sort to him; but I was afraid of hurting his feelings, so I only went on laughing inside me and thinking what an ass he was. It was such rot, his being nervous, when I wasn't a bit nervous myself!

The examiners were quite a decent lot, and as chummy as possible. I got on splendidly with them. I always do get on well with people whose manners are really good. They all said things about me, just out of earshot,



"It was Dowson I missed. He was at home with a cold in his beastly head."

to the master (who shall be nameless), and their remarks must have been agreeable, for he seemed much more self-possessed on the way home.

My relations were beastly facetious that evening, and called me a plucked chicken, by way of tenderly preparing me for disappointment; but their sufferings during the ten days that followed were more than enough to pay them out for such inhuman rotting. Although they had all sworn they didn't expect me to get the scholarship, they were in the most awful stew anyone could imagine while waiting to hear the result of the examination; and one of them, at least, turned pale every time the postman knocked at the door.

In the end, the news came at midday, when I was at school; and the person who turned pale (I am careful to avoid mentioning names) sent a note to the Head. It arrived just as we were going in for afternoon school, and the Head made a speech and gave us a half-holiday.

Cholmondeley and Brown and all the rest were awfully decent, and pounded me so hard, congratulating me, that I was every bit black and blue next day. I think at least ten of the juniors asked me how to spell "scholarship," by which I knew they were publishing the news abroad—just as if it would be in the least likely to interest their relations! Everyone was too sweet to be wholesome; and the one thing that disturbed me was that I couldn't, somehow, feel a perfect satisfaction in my triumph. Something essential was missing.

I couldn't think what it was for a long time; but at last the explanation occurred to me. It came like the illuminating flash of a searchlight. It was Dowson I missed. He was at home with a cold in his beastly head, and by that went as near as he could to "sucking" me again.

I find I have not, after all, said much on the subject of coolness in this article; but, as it must be plain to any sensible person that its value is illustrated in every page, I shall not insult the intelligence of my readers by offering an apology.

THE STONE-CHAT.

THE stone-chat beckons from bush to bush—
Chink-a-chink!
Through the golden furze you might press and push,
Through the heather purple and pink,
But you never would find, oh, never,
Though you sought and searched for ever,
The green arcade where his nest is laid,
In a hidden hollow of scented shade.
Watching you wander to and fro,
He would only mock you with laughter low—
Chink-a-chink!

The stone-chat flutters from spray to spray—
Chink-a-chink!
You may track and follow him all the day,
From the hill to the river's brink,
But you never will guess, oh, never,
Though you peep and pry for ever,
The secret deep he is sworn to keep,
The warded way where his darlings sleep.
Through the rosy heath where the hawkweeds glow,
He will only lure you with laughter low—
Chink-a-chink!

MAY BYRON.

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ARNAUX

THE CHRONICLE OF A HOMING PIGEON

By ERNEST THOMPSON SETON.*

WE passed through the side door of the big barn on West Nineteenth Street. The mild smell of the well-kept stable was lost in the sweet odour of the hay as we mounted a ladder and entered the long hay-garret. The south end was walled off, and the familiar "Coo—oo—cooo—oo—ooruk—at—a—coo," varied with the "whirr—whirr—whirr" of wings, informed us that we were at the pigeon-loft.

This was the home of a famous lot of birds, and to-day there was to be a training race among fifty of the youngsters. They had been taken out for short distances with their parents once or twice, then set free to return to the loft. Now for the first time they were to be flown without the old ones. The point of start was Elizabeth, N.J. It was a long journey for their first unaided attempt. "But then," the trainer remarked, "that's how we weed out the fools; only the best birds make it, and that's all we want back."

"A whistling arrow of blue shot in."

There was another side to the flight. It was to be a race among those that did return. All of the men about the loft, as well as several neighbouring fanciers, were interested in one or other of the Homers. They made up a purse for the winner, and on me, as an unprejudiced outsider, devolved the important duty of deciding which should take the stakes. Not the first bird *back*, but the first bird *into the loft*, was to win; for a bird that returns to his neighbourhood merely, without first reporting at home, is of little use as a letter-carrier.

The Homing Pigeon used to be called the Carrier, because it carried messages, but here I found the name Carrier restricted to the show-bird, the creature with grotesquely developed wattles around eye and beak; the one that carries the messages is now called the Homer, or Homing Pigeon—the bird that always comes home. These pigeons are not of any special colour, nor have they any of the fancy adornments of the kind that figure in bird shows. They are not bred for style, but for speed and for their mental gifts. They must be true to their home, able to return to it without fail. The sense of direction is now believed to be located in the bony labyrinth of the ear. There is no creature with finer sense of locality and direction than a good Homer, and the only visible proof of it is the great bulge on each side of the head over the ears—that, and the superb wings that complete his equipment to obey the noble impulse of home love. And now the mental and physical gifts of the last lot of young birds were to be put to test.

Although there were plenty of witnesses, I thought it best to close all but one of the trap-doors, and stand ready to shut that behind the first arrival.

I shall never forget the sensations of that day. I had been warned: "They start at 12.0, they should be here at 12.30; but look out! they come like a whirlwind. You hardly see them till they're in."

We were ranged along the inside of the loft, each with an eye to a crack or a partly closed pigeon door, anxiously scanning the south-western horizon, when someone shouted: "Look out—here they come!" Like a white cloud they burst into view, low

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skimming over the city roofs, around a great chimney-pile, and in two seconds after first being seen they were back. The flash of white, the rush of pinions, were all so sudden, so short, that, though preparing, I was unprepared. I was at the only open door. A whistling arrow of blue shot in, lashed my face with its pinions, and passed. I had hardly time to drop the little door, as a yell burst from the men: "Arnaux! Arnaux! I told you he would! Oh, he's a darling! Only three months old, and a winner—he's a little darling!" and Arnaux's owner danced, more for joy in his bird than in the purse he had won.

"He was invested with the silver anklet of the Sacred Order of the High Homer."

The men sat or kneeled and watched him in positive reverence as he gulped a quantity of water, then turned to the food-trough.

"Look at that eye! those wings! And did you ever see such a breast? Oh—but he's the real grit!" so his owner prattled to the silent ones, whose birds had been defeated.

That was the beginning of Arnaux's exploits. Best of fifty birds from a good loft, his future was bright with promise.

He was invested with the silver anklet of the Sacred Order of the High Homer. It bore his number, 2590 C, a number which, to-day, means much to all men in the world of the Homing Pigeon.

In that first flight from Elizabeth, only forty birds had returned. It is usually so. Some were weak, and got left behind; some were foolish, and strayed, to become the prey of hawks. By this simple process of flight selection, the pigeon-owners kept improving their stock. Of the ten, five were seen no more; but five returned later that day—not all at once, but straggling in. The last of the loiterers was a big, lubberly Blue pigeon. The man in the loft at the time called: "Here comes that old sap-headed Blue that Jakey was betting on. I didn't suppose he would come back; and I didn't care. neither, for it's my belief he has a stroke of Pouter."

The Big Blue, also called "Corner-box," from the nest where he was hatched, had shown remarkable vigour from the first. Though all were about the same age, he had grown faster than the others, was bigger, and, incidentally, handsomer, though the fanciers cared little for that. He seemed fully aware of his importance, and early showed a disposition to bully his smaller cousins. His owner prophesied great things of him, but in Billy's mind grave doubts arose over the length of his neck, the size of his crop, his carriage, and his over-size. "A bird can't make time pushing a bag of wind ahead of him. Them long legs is dead weight, an' a neck like that ain't got no gimp in it," Billy would grunt disparagingly, as he cleaned out the loft of a morning.

II.

THE training of the birds went on after this at regular times. The distance from home, of the start, was "jumped" twenty-five or thirty miles farther each time, and its direction changed, till the Homers knew the country for one hundred and fifty miles around New York. The original fifty birds dwindled to twenty, for the rigid process weeds out not only the weak and foolish, but those who may have temporary ailments or accidents, or who may make the mistake of over-eating at the beginning. There were many fine birds in the flock, broad-breasted, bright-eyed, long-winged creatures, made for swiftest flight, for high, unconscious emprise, for these were destined to be messengers in the service of man in times of serious need. Their colours were motley, white, blue, or brown. They wore no uniform, but each and all of the chosen remnant had the brilliant eye and the bulging ears of the finest Homer blood—and best and choicest of all, nearly always first among them, was Little Arnaux. He had not much to distinguish him when at rest, for now all of the band had the silver anklet; but in the air it was that Arnaux showed his make; and when the opening of the hamper gave the order: "Start!" it was Arnaux that first got under way, soared to the height deemed needful to exclude all local influences, divined the road to home, and took it, pausing not for food, drink, or company.

Notwithstanding Billy's evil forecasts, the Big Blue of the Corner-box was one of the chosen twenty. He was often late in return, he never was first; and sometimes when he

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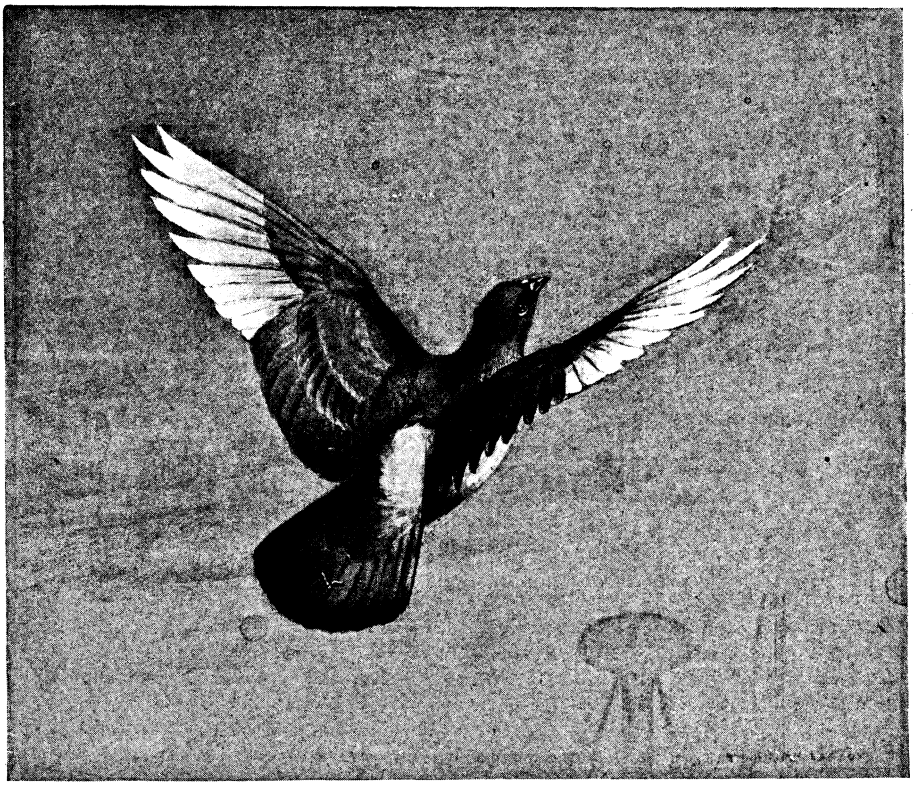

"When thrown into the air, he circled round the ship, then round again higher, then again higher."

came back, some hours behind the rest, it was plain that he was neither hungry nor thirsty, sure signs that he was a loiterer by the way. Still, he had come back, and now he wore on his ankle, like the rest, the sacred badge, and a number from the roll of possible fame. Billy despised him, set him in poor contrast with Arnaux; but his owner would reply: "Give him a chance—'soon ripe, soon rotten,' an' I always notice the best bird is the slowest to show up at first."

Before a year, Little Arnaux had made a record. The hardest of all work is over sea, for there is no chance of aid from landmarks; and the hardest of all times at sea is a fog, for then even the sun is blotted out, and there is nothing whatever for guidance. With memory, sight, and sound unavailable, the Homer has one thing left, and herein is his great strength—the inborn sense of direction. There is only one thing that can destroy this, and that is *fear;* hence the necessity of a stout little heart between those noble wings.

Arnaux, with two of his order, in course of training, had been shipped on an ocean steamer bound for Europe. They were to be released out of sight of land, but a heavy fog set in and forbade the start. The steamer took them on, the intention being to send them back on the next vessel. When ten hours out, the engine broke down, the fog settled dense over the sea, and the vessel was adrift and helpless as a log. She could only whistle for assistance, and so far as results were concerned, the captain might as well have wig-wagged. Then the pigeons were thought of. Starback, 2592 C, was first selected. A message for help was written on waterproof paper, rolled up, and lashed to his tail-feathers on the under-side. He was thrown into the air, and disappeared. Half an hour later, a second, the Big Blue Corner-box, No. 2600 C, was freighted with a message. He flew up, but almost immediately returned and alighted on the rigging. He was the picture of pigeon fear; nothing would induce him to leave the ship. He was so terrorised that he was easily caught and ignominiously thrust back into the coop.

Now the third was brought out—a small, chunky bird. The shipmen did not know him, but they noted down from his anklet his name and number, Arnaux—2590 C. It meant nothing to them, but the officer who

held him noted that his heart did not beat so wildly as that of the last bird had done. The message was taken from the Big Blue. It ran: "10 a.m., Tuesday. We broke our shaft 210 miles out from New York; we are drifting helplessly in the fog. Send out a tug as soon as possible. We are whistling one long, followed at once by one short, every sixty seconds. (Signed) THE CAPTAIN."

This was rolled up, wrapped in waterproof film, addressed to the Steamship Company, and lashed to the under-side of Arnaux's middle tail-feather.

When thrown into the air, he circled round the ship, then round again higher, then again higher in a wider circle, and he was lost to view; and still higher till quite out of sight and feeling of the ship. Shut out, now, from the use of all his senses but one, he gave himself up to that. Strong in him it was, and untrammelled of that murderous despot *Fear*. True as a needle to the pole went Arnaux now—no hesitation, no doubts; within one minute of leaving the coop he had soared above the fog and was speeding straight as a ray of light for the loft where he was born, the only place on earth where he could be made content.

That afternoon Billy was on duty, when the whistle of fast wings was heard, a blue flyer flashed into the loft and made for the water-trough. He was gulping down mouthful after mouthful when Billy gasped: "Why, Arnaux, it's you—you beauty!" Then, with the quick habit of the pigeon-man, he pulled out his watch and marked the time, 2.40 p.m. A glance showed the tie-string on the tail. He shut the door, dropped the catching net quickly over Arnaux's head. A minute later he had the roll in his hand, in two minutes he was speeding to the office of the Company, for there was a fat tip in view. There he learned that Arnaux had made the 210 miles in fog, over sea, in four hours and forty minutes, and within one hour the needful help had set out for the unfortunate steamer.

Two hundred and ten miles in fog over sea in four hours and forty minutes. This was a noble record. It was duly inscribed in the rolls of the Homing Club. Arnaux was held while the secretary with rubber stamp and indelible ink printed, on the snowy primary of his right wing, the record of the feat, with the date and reference number.

Starback, the second bird, never was heard of again. No doubt he perished at sea.

Blue Corner-box came back on the tug.

III.

THAT was the beginning of Arnaux's fame, his first public record; but others came fast, and several curious scenes were enacted in that old pigeon-loft, with Arnaux as the central figure. One day a carriage drove up to the stable, a white-haired gentleman got out, climbed the dirty stairs, and sat all the morning in the loft with Billy. Peering from his gold-rimmed glasses first at a lot of papers, next across the roofs of the city, watching, waiting—for what? News from a little place not forty miles away. News of greatest weight to him—tidings that would make or break him, tidings that must reach him before they could be telegraphed, a telegram meant at least an hour's delay at each end. What was faster than that for forty miles? In those days there was but one thing, a high-class Homer. Money would count for nothing if he could win. The best, the very best, at any price he must have, and Arnaux, with seven indelible records in his wings, was the chosen messenger. An hour went by, another, and a third was begun, when with whistle of wings the blue meteor flashed into the loft. Billy slammed the door and caught him. Deftly he snipped the threads and handed the roll to the banker. The old man turned deathly pale, fumbled it open, then his colour came back, "Thank God!" he gasped, and then went speeding to his office, master of the situation. Little Arnaux had saved him.

The banker wanted to buy the Homer, feeling, in a vague way, that he ought to honour and cherish him. But Billy was very clear about it. "What's the good? You can't buy a Homer's heart. You could keep him a prisoner, that's all; but nothing on earth could make him forsake the old loft where he was hatched." So Arnaux stayed at 211, West Nineteenth Street. But the banker did not forget.

There is in America a class of miscreants who think a flying pigeon is fair game, because it is probably far from home, or they shoot him because it is hard to fix the crime. Many a noble Homer, speeding with a life or death message, has been shot down by one of these wretches and remorselessly made into a pot-pie. Arnaux's brother, Arnolf, with three fine records on his wings, was thus murdered in the act of bearing a hasty summons for the doctor. As he fell dying at the gunner's feet, his superb wings, spread out, displayed his list of victories. The silver badge on his leg was there, and the gunner was smitten

with remorse. He had the message sent on, he returned the dead bird to the Homing Club, saying that he "found it." The owner came to see him, the gunner broke down under cross-examination, and was forced to admit that he himself had shot the Homer, but did so in behalf of a poor, sick neighbour who craved a pigeon-pie.

There were tears in the wrath of the pigeon-man. "My bird! my beautiful Arnolf! Twenty times he has brought vital messages, three times has he made records, twice has he saved human lives—and you'd shoot him for a pot-pie! I could punish you under the law, but I have no heart for such a poor revenge. I only ask you this: if ever you have a sick neighbour who wants a pigeon-pie, come to us—we'll freely supply him with pie-breed squabs; but if you have a trace of manhood about you, you will never, never again shoot, or allow others to shoot, our noble and priceless messengers."

This took place while the banker was in touch with the loft, while his heart was warm for the pigeons. He was a man of influence, and the Pigeon Protection legislation at Albany was the immediate fruit of Arnaux's exploit.

"Arnaux was held while the secretary printed, on his right wing, the record of the feat."

IV.

BILLY had never liked the Corner-box Blue (No. 2600 C). Notwithstanding the fact that he still continued in the ranks of the Silver Badge, Billy believed he was poor stuff. The steamer incident seemed to prove him a coward; he certainly was a bully.

One morning, when Billy went in, there was a row—two pigeons, a large and a small, alternately clenching and sparring all over the floor, feathers flying, dust and commotion everywhere. As soon as they were separated, Billy found the little one was Arnaux, and the big one was the Corner-box Blue. Arnaux had made a good fight, but was over-matched, for the Big Blue was half as heavy again.

It was soon very clear what they had fought over—a pretty little lady pigeon of the bluest Homing blood. The Big Blue cock had kept up a state of bad feeling by his bullying, but it was the little lady that had made them close in mortal combat, and Billy, not having authority to wring the Big Blue's neck, decided to interfere as far as he could in behalf of his favourite Arnaux.

Pigeon marriages are arranged somewhat like those of mankind. Propinquity is the first thing; force the pair together for a time, and let Nature take its course. So Billy locked Arnaux and the Little Lady up together in a separate apartment for two weeks; and to make doubly sure, he locked the Big Blue up with an Available Lady in another apartment for two weeks.

Things turned out just as was expected. The Little Lady surrendered to Arnaux, and the Available Lady to the Big Blue. Two nests were begun, and everything shaped for a "lived happily ever after." But the Big Blue was very big and handsome. He could blow out his crop and strut in the sun and make rainbows all round his neck, in a way that might turn the heart of the staidest Homerine.

Arnaux, though sturdily built, was small, and, except for his brilliant eyes, not especially good-looking. Moreover, he was often away on important business, and the Big Blue had nothing to do but stay around the loft and display his unlettered wings.

It is the very proper custom of moralists to point to the pigeon for examples of love and constancy. But, alas! there are exceptions. Vice is not by any means limited to the human race.

At the outset, Arnaux's wife had been deeply impressed with the Big Blue, and now that Arnaux was absent, the dreadful thing took place.

Arnaux returned from Boston one day to find that the Big Blue, while he retained his own Available Lady in the Corner-box, had also annexed the box and wife that belonged to himself; and a desperate battle followed. The only spectators were the two wives, and they maintained an indifferent aloofness. Arnaux fought with his famous wings; but they were none the better weapons because they now bore twenty records. His beak and feet were small, as became his blood, and his brave little heart could not make up for his lack of weight. The battle went against him. His wife sat unconcernedly in the nest, as though it were not her affair; and Arnaux might have been killed but for the timely arrival of Billy. He was savage

enough to wring the Blue bird's neck, but the bully escaped from the loft in time. Billy took tender care of Arnaux for a few days. At the end of a week he was well, and in ten days he was again on the road. Meanwhile he had evidently forgiven his faithless wife, for without any apparent feeling he took up his nesting as before. That month he made two new records. He brought a message ten miles in eight minutes, and he came from Boston in four hours. Every moment of the way he had been impelled by the master passion of home love. But it was a poor home-coming, if his wife figured in his thoughts at all, for he found her again flirting with the Big Blue cock. Tired as he was, the duel was renewed, and again would have been to a finish but for Billy's interference. He separated the fighters, then shut the Blue cock up in a coop, determined to get rid of him in some way. Meanwhile the "All Age Sweepstakes Handicap" from Chicago to New York was on, a race of one thousand miles. Arnaux had been entered six months before. His forfeit money was up, and, notwithstanding his domestic complications, his friends felt that he must not fail to appear.

The birds were shipped by train to Chicago, and liberated at intervals according to their handicap; and last of the start was Arnaux. They lost no time, and outside of Chicago several of the prime racers joined by common impulse, and the racing flock went through air on the same invisible track. A Homer may make a straight line when following his general sense of direction, but when following a familiar back track, he sticks to the well-remembered landmarks. Most of the birds had been trained by way of Cleveland. Arnaux knew the Cleveland route, but he also knew the way by Detroit; and soon after leaving Lake Michigan, he took the straight line for Detroit. Thus he caught up in his handicap and had the advantage of many miles. Detroit, Buffalo, Rochester, with the familiar towers and chimneys, faded behind him, and Syracuse was near at hand. It was now late afternoon; six hundred miles in twelve hours he had flown, and was undoubtedly leading the race; but the usual thirst of the flyer had attacked him. Skimming over the city roofs, he saw a flock of pigeons about their home, and descending from his high course in two or three great circles, he followed the in-going pigeons to the loft, drank greedily at the strange trough, as he had often done before, and as every pigeon-lover hospitably expects the messengers to do. The owner of the loft was there, and noted the strange bird. He stepped quietly up where he could inspect him. One of his own pigeons made momentary opposition to the stranger, and Arnaux, sparring sidewise with an open wing

"A desperate battle followed."

in pigeon style, displayed the long array of printed records. The man was a fancier. He started, pulled the string that shut the flying door, and in a few minutes Arnaux was his prisoner.

The robber spread the much-inscribed wings, read record after record, and glancing at the silver badge—it should have been gold—he read his name, "Arnaux," then exclaimed: "Arnaux! Arnaux! Oh, I've heard of you, you little beauty, and it's glad I am to trap you!" He snipped the message from his tail, unrolled it, and read: "Arnaux left Chicago at 4 a.m., scratch in the Any Age Sweepstakes, for New York."

"Six hundred miles in twelve hours! By the powers, that's a record-breaker!" and the pigeon-stealer gently, almost reverently, put the fluttering bird back into a safe cage. "Well," he added, "I know it's no use trying to make you stay; but I can breed from you, and have some of your strain."

So Arnaux was shut up in a large and comfortable loft with several other prisoners.

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The man, though a thief, was a lover of Homers. He gave his captive everything that could ensure his comfort and safety. For three months he left him in that loft. At first Arnaux did nothing all day but walk up and down the wire screen, looking high and low for means of escape; but in a week or two he seemed to have abandoned the attempt, and the watchful gaoler began the second part of his scheme. He introduced a coy young lady pigeon, but it did not seem to answer; Arnaux was not even civil to her. After a time the gaoler removed the female, and Arnaux was left in solitary confinement for a month. Now a different female was brought in, but with no better luck, and thus it went on, for a year different charmers were introduced. Arnaux either violently repelled them or was scornfully indifferent, and at times the old longing to get away came back with twofold power, so that he darted up and down the wire front or dashed with all his force against it. When the storied feathers of his wings began to moult, his gaoler saved them, as precious things. Curious to relate, the caution of the thief succumbed to the pride of the fancier, and as each new feather came he reproduced on it the story of its owner's fame.

Two years had gone slowly by, and the gaoler at length put Arnaux in a new loft with a new lady pigeon. By chance she closely resembled the faithless one at home. Arnaux actually seemed to heed this latest one. Once the gaoler thought he saw his famous prisoner paying some slight attention to the charmer; and, yes! he surely saw her preparing a nest. Then, assuming that they had reached a final understanding, the gaoler for the first time opened the outlet, and Arnaux was free. Did he hang around in doubt? Did he hesitate? No, not for one moment. As soon as the drop of the door left open the way, he shot through; he spread those wonderful blazoned wings, and with no second thought for the latest Circe, sprang from the hated prison loft—away and away.

V.

We have no means of looking into the pigeon mind; we may go wrong in conjuring up for it deep thoughts of love and welcome home; but we are safe in this, we cannot too strongly paint—we cannot too highly praise and glorify that wonderful, God-implanted, mankind-fostered home-love that glows unquestionably in this noble bird. Call it what you like—a mere instinct deliberately constructed by man for his selfish ends; explain it away if you will, dissect it, misname it, and it still is there, in overwhelming, imperishable master-power as long as the brave little heart and wings can beat.

Home, sweet home. Never had mankind a deeper love of home than had Arnaux. The trials and sorrows of the old pigeon-loft were forgotten in that all-dominating force of his nature. Not years of prison bars, not later loves nor fear of death, could down its power; and Arnaux, had the gift of song been his, must surely have sung as sings a hero in his highest joy, when sprang he from the "lighting" board, up, circling free, soaring up, up, in widening, heightening circles of ashy blue in the blue, flashing those many-lettered wings of white, till they seemed like jets of fire—up and on, driven by that home-love, faithful to his only home and to his faithless love; closing his eyes, they say; closing his ears, they tell; shutting his mind, we all believe—to nearer things, to two years of his life, to one-half of his prime, but soaring in the blue, retiring, as a saint might do, into his inner self, giving himself up to that inmost guide. He was the captain of the ship, but the pilot, the chart and compass all, were that deep-implanted instinct. One thousand feet above the trees the inscrutable whisper came, and Arnaux, in arrowy swiftness now, was pointing for the south-south-east. The little flashes of white fire on each side were lost in the low sky, and the reverent robber of Syracuse saw Arnaux never more.

The fast express was steaming down the valley. It was far ahead, but Arnaux overtook and passed it, as the wild-duck passes the swimming musk-rat. High in the valleys he went, low over the hills of Chenango, where the pines were combing the breezes. Out from his oak-tree eyrie a hawk came wheeling and sailing, for he had marked the flyer and meant him for his prey. Arnaux turned neither right nor left, nor raised nor lowered his flight, nor lost a wing-beat. The hawk was in waiting in the gap ahead, and Arnaux passed him, even as a deer in his prime may pass by a bear in his pathway. Home! home! was the only burning thought—the blinding impulse.

Beat—beat—beat—those flashing pinions went with speed unslacked on the now familiar road. In an hour the Catskills were at hand. In two hours he was passing

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"Under the palisades he passed, under the peregrine's eyrie."

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over them. Old friendly places, swiftly coming now, lent more force to his wings. Home! home! was the silent song that his heart was singing. Like the traveller dying of thirst who sees the palm-trees far ahead, his brilliant eyes took in the distant smoke of Manhattan.

Out from the crest of the Catskills there launched a falcon. Swiftest of the race of rapine, proud of his strength, proud of his wings, he rejoiced in a worthy prey. Many and many a pigeon had been borne to his nest, and riding the wind he came, swooping, reserving his strength, awaiting the proper time. Oh, how well he knew the very moment! Down—down like a flashing javelin. No wild-duck, no hawk could elude him, for this was a falcon. Turn back now, O Homer, and save yourself; go round the dangerous hills. Did he turn? Not a whit, for this was Arnaux. Home! home! home! was his only thought. For the danger he merely added to his speed, and the peregrine stooped—stooped at what? —a flashing of colour—a twinkling of whiteness—and went back empty, while Arnaux cleft the air of the valley as a stone from a sling, to be lost, a white-winged bird—a spot with flashing halo,and quickly a twinkling speck in the offing. On down the valley of Hudson, the well-known highway; for two years he had not seen it! Now he dropped low as the noon breeze came forth and ruffled the river below him. Home! home! home! and the towers of a city are coming into view! Home! home! past the great spider-bridge of Poughkeepsie, skimming, skirting the river-banks. Low now by the bank as the wind arose. Low, alas! too low! What fiend was it tempted a gunner in June to lurk on that hill by the margin? What devil directed his gaze to the twinkling of white that came from the blue to the northward? Oh, Arnaux, Arnaux, skimming low, forget not the gunner of old; too low—too low you are clearing that hill. Too low—*too late!* Flash—bang! and the death-hail has reached him—reached, maimed, but not downed him. Out of the beating pinions broken feathers printed with records go fluttering earthward. The "nought" of his sea record is gone; not two hundred, but twenty-one miles it now reads. Oh, shameful pillage! A dark stain appears on his bosom, but Arnaux keeps on. Home—homeward bound. The danger is past in an instant. Home—homeward he steers, straight as before, but the wonderful speed is diminished; not a mile a minute now; and the wind makes undue sounds in his tattered pinions. The stain in his breast tells of broken force, but on, straight on, he flies. Home—home is in sight, and the pain in his breast is forgotten. The tall towers of the city are in clear view of his far-seeing eye as he skims by the high cliffs of Jersey. On—on, the pinion may flag, the eye may darken, but the home-love is stronger and stronger.

Under the tall palisades where, screened from the wind, he passed over the sparkling water, over the trees, under the peregrine's eyrie, under the pirate's castle, where the great, grim peregrines lurked, peering like black-masked highwaymen, and marked the on-coming pigeon. Arnaux knew them of old. Many a message was lying undelivered in that nest—many a record-bearing plume had fluttered away from its fastness. But Arnaux had faced them before, and now he came as before—on, onward, swift, but not as he had been; the deadly gun had sapped his force, had lowered his speed. On—on; and the peregrines, biding their time, went forth like two bow-bolts, strong and lightning swift, they went against one weak and wearied.

Why tell of the race that followed? Why paint the despair of a brave little heart in sight of the home he had craved in vain? In a minute all was over. The peregrines screeched in their triumph. Screeching and sailing, they swung to their eyrie, and the prey in their claws was the body—the last of the bright little Arnaux. There on the rocks the beaks and claws of the bandits were red with the life of the hero. Torn asunder were those splendid wings, and their records were scattered unnoticed. In sun and in storm they lay till the killers themselves were killed, and their stronghold rifled. And none knew the fate of the matchless one till, deep in the dust and rubbish of that pirate-nest, the avenger found, among others of its kind, a silver ring, the Sacred Badge of the High Homer, and read upon it a pregnant inscription:—

ARNAUX, 2590 C.

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BUNKHUM.

By FRANK RICHARDSON.*

HERE is only one Jellybrand in the world—George Jellybrand, the inventor of Bunkhum. Of course, there are other Jellybrands, such as P. G. Jellybrand (well known and respected in the mouse-trap business), Theodore Jellybrand, who wears the finest set of whisker-fittings in Bexley, but is otherwise and elsewhere practically unknown, and there is also G. H. Jellybrand, late of Chipping-Sodbury—a locality which you can look up for yourself on the map. But, so far as the world of erudition is concerned, there exists only George Jellybrand, the inventor of Bunkhum.

Of Bunkhum, the greatest scientific discovery of the age, this much is known to most of us :—

(*a*) Bunkhum is 2,000,000 per cent. harder than platinum.

(*b*) Bunkhum is harder to talk sensibly about than the crisis in the Church, the Fiscal Question, or the causes leading to the insanity of Mullahs.

(*c*) If there were an ounce of Bunkhum in the world, it would extinguish the sun, repatriate the Jews, and—

(*d*) Possibly pay the rates.

(*e*) Bunkhum is worth, roughly, a hundred billion pounds per ton.

(*f*) There are not more than three grains of Bunkhum in this planet—unless Jellybrand has secretly cornered the supply and is waiting for a rise in price.

(*g*) Bunkhum is the force that controls the universe.

(*h*) Bunkhum is—Bunkhum, and that's about all one can safely say.

These are facts. But, though entirely familiar to the intelligent reader, they were absolutely unknown to G. H. Jellybrand on his cosy little estate at Chipping-Sodbury—which you have by this time, no doubt, found for yourself on the map. A man of bucolic temperament, fat, forty-five, and financially robust, he read with zest the *Poultry Pioneer*, for he reared Cochin-Chinas, reverently to be mentioned ; he kept a file of the *Doggist*, for his Bob-tailed Dachshunds are a much-sought strain—a little leggy, but remarkable for staying powers. In many respects he was a well-informed man, but of Bunkhum he knew no more than an emu knows about envelopes.

In this disgraceful condition of mental sloth he was entirely happy. Various letters, half-read, wholly unilluminative, from his solicitors, did not distract an appreciable portion of his attention from his Cochins and his kennels. But at length—by no invitation of his, as a consequence of no letter written by him seeking information—his uncle, Sir Richard Wemberton, and the eminent solicitor of the Wemberton estates, journeyed down to Chipping-Sodbury and explained things.

"Explained" was not, from Jellybrand's point of view, the correct word. They stated complicated facts ; they produced unintelligible "papers," and they predicted a dire future.

He, calm in the chaos, described the sensation produced on his mind by the visit.

"There's some sort of infernal litigation going on, or about to come on, with regard to the Wemberton Collieries. My income, beyond three hundred a year, suddenly ceases—at any rate, for a time. I've got to sell my place. I've got to spend the bulk of my days for the next year or so in your offices, Mr. Sugg. Is that about the size of it ?"

"That is a fairly accurate description of the—ahem—state of affairs."

"All right, Mr. Sugg. Excuse me, are you Mr. Sugg or Mr. Dibley ? I know your firm is both ; but, hang it, I can't remember which *you* are !"

"I am Mr. Dibley."

"Good. You're 'your Mr. Dibley,' about whose constant occupation with my affairs your firm is always writing to me. Your firm seems very pleased with your energy, Mr. Dibley. You, if I may say so, are wonderfully active for an octogenarian."

"Now, George, never mind about Mr.

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Dibley," said Sir Richard. "What are you going to do?"

Sir Richard was ninety-three years of age, and he regarded any felicitation on the activity of a mere octogenarian as unnecessary and in poor taste.

". . . I suppose I shall have to take rooms in town. It won't suit me, you know, after the country. I've not been to London since the second Jubilee. Besides, I don't belong to a club."

"As to that, there won't be any difficulty, eh, Dibley?"

"I don't quite follow, Sir Richard."

"Well, we're both on the Committee of the Forum. We could easily run him in."

"G. H. Jellybrand on his cosy little estate."

"True. . . . But your nephew . . . with his tastes . . . is hardly the man for the Forum."

"Confound it, sir, any nephew of mine, even if he had no tastes at all, would be just the man for the Forum."

"I didn't quite mean what you mean, Sir Richard."

"I don't care what you mean. But what I mean is that if my nephew joins a club, the Forum is the club he joins—none of your new-fangled pothouses with 5,000 members and nothing more like a gentleman than a begging-letter writer in the lot! I propose and you second him, and the thing's done."

And it was. Thus it came about that Jellybrand achieved the high honour of election to the Forum, an honour extremely difficult of attainment, save by the most eminent men of our day. For the Forum is the Parnassus of the living. This, indeed, is an understatement—there are many men whose reputations are immortal, but against whose persons the Forum firmly shuts its doors. To join its membership one must be egregious, either by brains or by blood. And the general committee is not prone to confuse notoriety with fame, as is the custom of our day. A case in point: Snagge, the eminent *littérateur*, was unanimously excluded by reason of the fact that, in a weak moment, he had invented the corn-cure with which his name will be eternally allied. Had Jellybrand understood this state of things, he would have marvelled at his election, or he would have attributed it to his prominence as a rearer of Cochins, or to his success in the Dachshund department. But he, living remote from the world of erudition, knew scarcely more of the Forum than he did—let us say—of Bunkhum. The fact is that in his mind the club was vaguely confused with the Junior Forum, a totally different institution.

His first visit to the senior institution occurred on a dismal afternoon, and he was appalled by the gloom of his surroundings. All the members seemed creaking phantoms of decrepitude and eld. Scarcely a man devoid of ear-trumpet or of crutch. Some there were moving crazily on scaffolding, mumbling to themselves in cryptic soliloquy, impermeable to companionship. The place, he thought, was more like a cripples' home than a club. Indeed, an enterprising undertaker had lately caused considerable annoyance by sending to each of the members a circular eulogistic of himself and his practice, and requesting the favour of custom. A detachable coupon, if filled in and forwarded to his office within the next three months, ensured a ten per cent. reduction on any "order

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for a funeral outfit, placed during the period."

But the members took the scheme amiss. Was the Forum Club the anteroom to Kensal Green?

"Pshaw!"

"What next?"

"Egad!"

. . . according as the commentator was literary, scientific, or military.

In spite of the sinister effect produced on the club by the ill-directed (and entirely unremunerative) enterprise of the undertaker, a wave of paralytic interest was aroused by Jellybrand's entrance into the smoking-room. Eager faces craned through the smoke emitted from asthma-cigarettes, catarrh-cigars, and pleuro-pneumonia-pipes.

The invalids were agog, but Jellybrand calmly searched the *Pall Mall* for stop-press news of a doggy character.

At length the *doyen* of the club, his wheel-chair propelled by a waiter, approached and sought speech.

Jellybrand would have none of him. To his thinking, a prehistoric bore was intruding on his privacy. For no second did he suspect that the aged man was the greatest living authority on Cyclopæan Architecture in Polynesia. And had he suspected, his course would have been in no way different.

He suggested that the old gentleman should go somewhere else and . . . . get mended. But the old gentleman did not understand, and nodded and gibbered and offered a sort of phonograph to facilitate conversation.

Defeated, Jellybrand left the club.

On the next day he entered circumspectly and avoided the vicinity of the Polynesian expert and the more conspicuous invalids, but only to fall into the hands of Dr. Disney Lincoln, the eminent alienist.

Jovially the doctor sat down by his side.

"Very pleased to welcome you to our club, Mr. Jellybrand."

"Thank you." He was reading a scholarly article on "Our Cochins in Peace and War," and he infinitely preferred it to the conversation of any alienist, however eminent.

Unruffled, the other proceeded: "Any news in the world of Bunkhum?"

Jellybrand, slightly annoyed, entirely mystified, stared at him. Of Bunkhum, as has been said, he knew nothing. The spoken word suggested a slang term rather than the great scientific discovery which will make the dawn of the twentieth century for ever memorable in the minds of men.

Severely he answered—

"There is always news in the world of Bunkhum."

"Always making new discoveries, eh?"

"Always."

A pause.

"I suppose, now, Mr. Jellybrand, if there was any Bunkhum—no matter how small a quantity—in this room, we should be blown to—ahem!—blazes?"

"Why?"

"Because . . . we . . . eh . . . should. Because of the power of Bunkhum."

"Do you suggest that among the dozen or so of men present there is no suggestion of Bunkhum?"

"No . . . *is* there? . . . I don't know much about the subject. . . . But how could there be?"

"It is absurd to assume that there is not. Of course, these gentlemen are all very old, but . . ."

"Ah! you think that men may in their youth produce Bunkhum; whereas, after a certain age, they lose their power of so doing? Most interesting, most interesting. Still, I thought it was only to be found in Bath and Tunbridge Wells."

"Why there more than anywhere else? You can find it anywhere—if you only keep your eyes open."

"But not in appreciable quantities, surely? Of course, I'm a mere sciolist in regard to the matter, so mine may be a foolish question. Forgive me, Mr. Jellybrand, but would you say that the presence of Bunkhum could be detected *anywhere* and in appreciable quantities—that is, in quantities which *you* could appreciate?"

The alienist leant back in his chair and tapped his fingers together in an eminently sound manner. So eminently sound was this manner that when Dr. Lincoln assumed it in the presence of a suspected lunatic, he or she immediately raved.

Jellybrand was not impressed by the soundness of the specialist. On the contrary, it bored him. But as he was a new member, he answered with only moderate irritation—

"If I detect it, I don't appreciate it. Why should I?"

"Because . . . because you discovered it."

"Yes, yes; but you don't appreciate everything you discover, do you?"

In all humility the other answered—

"I have never made a discovery of any great importance."

"Neither have I."

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"Oh, sir, my dear sir—may I say my very dear sir?—such modesty is really a pleasure—almost a miracle. You have made no discovery of importance, and yet you discovered Bunkhum!"

"Only a little—not—often—I've missed a lot?"

"Thank Heavens! Now, I ask you as

"Sir Richard was ninety-three years of age."

man to man—what would happen if you discovered all the Bunkhum there is in the world? You'd be a billionaire several times over, eh?"

"Yes, I dare say I should."

"But what would happen to the world?"

"In the extremely improbable event that you suggest, the world would go to the devil. How could things go on as they do now . . . ?"

"Then you don't think that all of it will be discovered?"

"Is it likely?" Tired of the persistence of his questioner, he returned to his paper.

"I hope not, I'm sure," answered Lincoln, heaving a sigh of relief. His personal interest in the matter caused Jellybrand to regard him with suspicion. However, he said nothing.

"Tell me, Mr. Jellybrand—the subject is vastly interesting to me as a man of science—do you think there is any truth in the theory advanced by Professor von Backenbart that Bunkhum exists in the glow-worm?"

A stony stare was the answer to this question. As a supplement—

"Excuse me, sir. I am reading a very interesting article on Cochin-China fowls; or, rather, I should like to read a very interesting article on . . ."

"A thousand pardons! Indeed! Indeed! I had no intention . . . trespassing . . . learned leisure . . . another time . . . perhaps. . . . When the papers are dull . . . renew delightful conversation. Good day, sir—may I say my very dear sir?"

"If you like—if it gives you any pleasure."

"A thousand thanks."

"Mad, but civil," was Jellybrand's mental summary of the eminent expert in lunacy.

Thereupon Dr. Lincoln made haste to report the trend of his delightful conversation to the more important of the able-eared members of the club. He had found the great man entirely modest, luminous on his subject, but by no means didactic.

"And what the dickens is his subject?" asked Sir Kirkby Wiske.

Sir Kirkby had lately resigned his judgeship on the Common Law side. An octogenarian, he had for ten years been entitled to his pension, but he had struggled manfully along until chronic insomnia on the Bench compelled him to retire. Yet his resignation had not impaired that comprehensive ignorance which had been his chief characteristic as a judge.

"He's the man who invented Bunkhum, Sir Kirkby."

"Never heard of Bunkhum. What is it, Lincoln?"

"It is . . . or, rather, perhaps one should say . . ."

"It may be defined in two ways," said Professor Onslow Parker, the world-famed author of "Modern Microbes." "You may define it objectively or subjectively."

"I dare say you may," insisted the judge. "But what is it? Tell me what the deuce it is, and then you can define it afterwards."

"It is best explained by an illustration." said a scientifically minded Prebendary of Bath and Wells.

"Supposing you had a quarter of a grain of Bunkhum . . ."

Sir Kirkby dealt summarily with him—

"Supposing I ask you what your name is, would you ask me to imagine that I had a quarter of the letters in your name? Would that be a reasonable reply to make? Would

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it or would it not? I ask a simple question and I want a simple answer."

A simple question!

Came as a chorus—

"You had better ask Jellybrand."

"All right, I'll catch him here to-morrow."

On the morrow he caught him in the smoking-room.

"My name's Kirkby Wiske, and I'm very pleased to meet you, Mr. Jellybrand. I hear—that is, my friends assure me—that you take a great interest in . . . Bunkhum. Excuse me asking the question, but I've only just retired from the Bench, so I'm not as up-to-date as I should wish to be. What . . . is . . . Bunkhum?"

This was too much. Jellybrand sat up aggressively in his chair.

"How do you mean—*what* is it?"

"Precisely what I say. I am seeking information."

"Do you mean to imply . . . Sir Kirby, that you, an ex-judge of the High Court, don't know what it is?"

"No, I don't. I rarely dealt with Patent cases."

"I do not wish to be rude; but, at your age, I doubt whether it would be worth your while to investigate the matter."

He returned to his newspaper testily. But Sir Kirkby persisted.

"Not from a scientific point of view, perhaps; but I should like to acquire a smattering. When one has retired from the Bench, one likes to know what is going on in the world."

His plea had in it a top-note of pathos.

"Well, I'll tell you what is going on in the world. There's a jolly good dog-show at the Crystal Palace. . . ."

And it happened that the judge was doggy. And it ensued that for an hour and a half they talked dog-talk . . . and became firm friends.

"An excellent fellow!" the judge reported to his particular friends in the club. "Bunkhum is, I have no hesitation in saying, the greatest invention of the age."

"Undoubtedly," acquiesced General Cringle-Blake.

"Beyond all doubt," affirmed the Prebendary of Bath and Wells.

"There has never been anything like it," said Dr. Disney Lincoln.

"I join issue with you, Sir Kirkby," stated Professor Onslow Parker with some heat. "It is unjust to Jellybrand to say that his invention is the greatest of the age. I maintain that it is the greatest the world has ever known."

"Quite, quite," apologised the judge. And, by way of making honourable amendment, he added: "He's just the sort of man we want on the committee. We need young blood. Jellybrand doesn't look over fifty."

"Not a day," said the prebendary. "I sometimes think that the committee should be—I won't say younger, but not quite so old. You see, we lost two members last week, Sir Richard Wemberton and poor old Dibley."

"Still, we don't want to turn the committee into a kindergarten," objected the General.

"By no means. Not by any manner of means," commented the professor. Then he continued: "This morning I had a long talk with him. Mind you, I had kept a perfectly judicial mind—an open mind, if I may say so in the presence of Sir Kirkby—with regard to Jellybrand. I knew only of his wonderful discovery, and of the fact that he never obtruded himself on one's notice by means of the halfpenny—ahem—Press—not that one is *au fait* with the Press—the—ahem—halfpenny Press. Well, I went up to him and told him who I was, and he, with nervous hesitation truly delightful in the truly great, seemed not to know who I was."

"Go on."

"Proceed."

"Then I spoke to him about his invention. But immediately he withdrew into his shell—if you will pardon the conchological simile as applied to a man of his mental calibre. He behaved almost with tetchiness. On his own subject he was mum. The vocal Memnon must have been a voluble babbler in comparison to Jellybrand. Still, he was willing to talk on other matters. One thing led to another, till at length we conversed about poultry. Now, I knew that Jellybrand had pursued his scientific researches in the complete seclusion afforded by some outlandish country place. That is the one fact with regard to his private life of which we are aware. Still, it is an astounding thing he should have been able to spare time from his studies to devote to the breeding of Cochin-Chinas. Now, I—and I say it without pride—have made Cochin-Chinas the hobby of my leisure moments. I subscribe to the doctrine that a great man should know something about everything and all about something. Jellybrand knows all about Cochins!"

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"The members seemed creaking phantoms of decrepitude and eld."

"All about Bunkhum," said Dr. Disney Lincoln.

"And all about Bob-tailed Dachshunds," said the judge firmly.

"Therefore he ought to be on the committee," said they all.

"Is the club going to start a chemist's shop, or a dog-show, or a poultry-run?"

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asked a giddy septuagenarian, whose outside reputation as a wit—he had written twenty successful plays—was not recognised by the committee, owing probably to the fact that he showed no power as a punster.

In fact, he considered punning a happily lost art; and when members of the club played practical jokes with the King's English, he regarded their performances as serious symptoms of senility, not at all as essays in humour.

The query of the unintelligible jester settled the question. Those present unanimously decided that Jellybrand should be asked to stand for the committee.

So it came about that, as the mouthpiece of the "young blood party," Dr. Disney Lincoln approached Mr. Jellybrand. Said he—

"My dear sir, if I may so style you, it is the wish of a large number of the members that you should stand for the committee."

"Good Heavens! why? I've only just joined the club."

"True. But you are already one of the most popular men in it. Your modesty appeals to us all. We are, perhaps, a little too egotistical. We are all of us eminent men—present company, or, rather, half of the present company, excepted. Hah! hah!—I like my joke, you know."

"Good! I am pleased. If you like it, all is well."

"Now, you, Mr. Jellybrand, never discuss your special subject. You don't care to talk about Bunkhum."

Angrily Jellybrand rose from his seat.

"No, sir, I don't. And I object to your mentioning the subject to me. There seems to be a conspiracy in this club to talk to me about Bunkhum. It is an insult. Do you understand? Never you allude to it again, confound you!"

"Pray, sir, pray——!" expostulated the other. "It is, of course, impertinence for me to mention the subject to *you!*"

"It is! It is! Don't do it, I warn you!"

Eventually the two settled a sort of working agreement. Jellybrand would stand for the committee; Disney Lincoln would never mention Bunkhum. With no little pride the doctor reported his success.

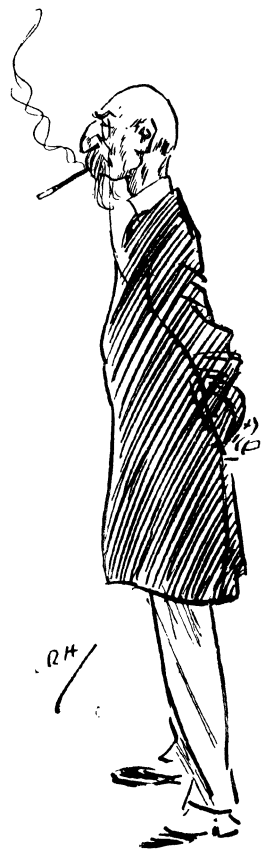
"The most modest man I ever met. He loathes, absolutely loathes the mention of Bunkhum! Now that we know his feeling on the matter, I think it would be discourteous in us to allude to his discovery in his presence."

"Deuced good idea!" said the General.

"I think so, too," said the judge.

"I am not in sympathy with some of the developments of latter-day science," said the prebendary.

"I think that—learned though Jellybrand undoubtedly is—he might with advantage



"'Undoubtedly,' acquiesced General Cringle-Blake."

devote some consideration to my theory of 'Modern Microbes,'" said the professor.

"I maintain that the constant discussion of Bunkhum in season and out of season by the erudite and the ignorant may have disastrous effects on the sanity of the next generation," said the alienist.

"We will say no more about it—at least—to him," said they all.

And they kept their words. Thus it came about that, in spite of carpers who maintained that they "couldn't have schoolboys on the committee," Jellybrand, at the age of forty-six, was elected at the head of the poll. Yet he was not proud, and so he waxed in popularity. For his dog and fowl conversation found great favour with all. All were

amazed and delighted that there existed one man in the world unaffected by the mania for talking about Bunkhum. And that man himself its inventor!

So vastly popular did he become that he practically ruled the club. He even introduced an innovation—the first in fifty years—an invalids'-room, with a staff of nurses. To it were relegated the lame, the blind, the deaf, and the phenomenally offensive. The ex-morning-room door bore a notice—

INVALIDS ONLY.

So great was the success of this scheme that one by one the other rooms of the club were devoted to a similar purpose.

In turn the billiard-room, the card-room, the library, the smoking-room, and the coffee-room were invaded by the physically unsound and were labelled accordingly. At length the only apartment open to Jellybrand was the committee-room. All the others bore notices which excluded the able-bodied. And of the committee-room he was the sole occupant. Here in solitude and gloom, day after day he, the most popular member of the club, read doggy notes and chit-chat

"The hall-porter made an admirable suggestion."

about Cochins. From sheer boredom it chanced that he examined with considerable care the Candidates' Book. And he found the study interesting and surprising. Candidates whose reputations reached to the ends of the earth—soldiers, actors, diplomatists, authors—seemed to have been entirely unsupported except by proposer and seconder. Against their names appeared in red ink, "Not elected," "Withdrawn at candidate's request," "Withdrawn by proposer." This was strange. Again, the candidatures of persons whose identity he ignored, were supported by a pageful of hieroglyphic autographs. They obtained a verdict of "Elected." Clearly the club attempted to make a corner in nonentities. He marvelled how he, a celebrity in Cochin circles, a well-known man in the doggy world, had ever compassed his admission. He would turn to the page containing the entry relative to his case.

Page! There were four! And each was so full of bescrabbled signatures that it resembled a useless piece of blotting-paper!

Apparently every member of the club had certified his ignorance of the candidate's existence. Jellybrand was not vain, but . . . he felt a sensation of sorrow. He was the nonentity of nonentities, and after all he had done for Cochins, after his efforts in the Dachshund line!

Somewhat galling.

Still he did not cease from his labours for the benefit of the club.

The hall-porter made an admirable suggestion. He explained that the mortality among the members was alarming; he stated that when a gentleman died on the club premises, several other gentlemen were, as eye-witnesses, summoned to attend the inquest. In so doing, they caught chills and required inquests of their own; in fact, inquest bred inquest. The porter suggested the remedy . . . and the honour belongs to him. But Jellybrand perfected the scheme. He wrote to the proper authority (who, although he did not suspect it, was a member of the Forum), stating his case, with statistics.

The proper authority referred him to the local authority, a member of the Forum. (All local authorities who are worth their salt are members of the Forum.)

Thus it happened that in an incredibly short time (for a business nation) it was arranged that all inquests on members of the Forum should take place in the club building.

Jellybrand, the omnipotent, set apart the committee-room for the purpose of a mortuary, labelled it

INQUESTS ONLY

and sat in the hall to read about dogs and Cochins. Occasionally he talked to the servants, for, as an able-bodied man, he was cut off from the society of the members.

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But he reflected that it was absurd to pay a subscription to a club in order to sit in the hall. It would be cheaper to buy the *Poultry News* and the *Daily Dachshund*, and read these enterprising journals in the waiting-room at Charing Cross. Still, he had done so much for the club that he had grown fond of it.

On the last Wednesday in December, the general committee sat at 5.30, an hour by which all the inquests had been concluded. Amongst the candidates figured "George Jellybrand," and eight pages of signatures supported his claim to membership.

Jellybrand (in the chair) expressed astonishment at the strength of the backing.

The General explained matters. Said he—

"My dear old fellow, any relative of yours . . . I got everybody to support him."

The prebendary, smiling with ecstatic benevolence—

"You have done so much for the club."

The professor—

". . . . . 'Modern Microbes.'"

The judge (brightly)—

"A chip of the old block."

Dr. Disney Lincoln—

"I hear he takes some sort of interest in Bunkhum . . . I remember being told that he . . ."

Thereon Jellybrand (who had done so much for the club) said firmly—

"This man is no relative of mine. . . . I shall blackball him. . . . If I have done anything at all for the club, I think it is your duty to blackball him. . . . Why should anybody, simply because he has the same name as myself, come here and talk nonsense to me?"

* * * * *

This is the real reason why George Jellybrand, the greatest scientist the world has ever known, was unanimously blackballed at the Forum Club. It is well that he should know it.

THE KEY.

I CLOSED my heart with a lock of gold,
A lock and a key and a golden chain;
But all my care was, alas! in vain,
For I gave the key for Love to hold—
The key of my heart with the lock of gold.

Last night Love brought me a tearful tale:
"The key that you gave is lost!" he cried.
"Now, how shall we open the portals wide?"
And he wept so sore, and he turned so pale,
That I gave my trust to his tearful tale.

To-day came one, and my heart cried "Stay!
Break open, break open the door for me."
"But why," quoth he, "when I hold the key?
Love gave it to me but yesterday."
So he entered him in, and my heart said "Stay!"

CHARLES FFOULKES.

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JAKE WEBSTER'S PAL

A BUSH MYSTERY.

By JOHN DOBSON.

MARNEY and I were sitting in the verandah at Hope Springs one evening early in November five-and-twenty years ago. He was more uncommunicative than ever. There he sat, puffing away at his pipe—*my* pipe, by the way—enjoying *my* "rough cut," *my* best chair, and, if I may say so, *my* society, and yet frowning at nothing, hardly condescending to reply to any remarks of mine, and absolutely refusing to look up when I tried to draw his attention to the glorious sunset that was beginning.

There was not the semblance of a cloud to be seen anywhere, but the atmosphere in all its pureness was glowing with the most brilliant golden light as the ball of fire slowly sank to the horizon. Between us and the sun, as far as we could see, there was nothing but scrub—low, stunted, uninteresting mallee-scrub, with here and there a leaning shea-oak, blown to one side by the north wind, whose scorching blasts its youth had been unable to resist. There was no green, for an almost rainless winter had brought but little grass, and what was left of that by the sheep was long since dried to a dirty yellow by the autumn sun. The dull grey-blue of what little foliage Australian trees possess lent a sombre foreground to the bright scene beyond, and, knowing Marney as I did, I was not surprised to hear him abuse the view at last.

He had been with me six months at this time, for I remember it was on the first of May that he arrived at the station, bringing a letter of introduction to me from the late manager, yet we were hardly greater friends now than on the day we met. A fine, handsome man he was—six foot and as straight as a young gum-tree, dark in complexion, with black hair and moustache, and eyes as nearly black as could be. The whitest of teeth showed in striking contrast whenever he smiled (which was very seldom), and his voice was low and musical.

Yet there was something in his manner—so abrupt at times and so cynical always—that, if it had not been for the sake of having a companion or associate of some sort in that lonely, out-of-the-way place, I should soon have made arrangements for his departure. But I had been so desolate and miserable during the short time I was alone in charge of the run that I was glad of what little society he afforded me, even as I had welcomed his arrival. What his history was, why he came to Hope Springs to learn sheep-farming, or how Simpson came to know him, had never reached my ears; for Simpson was drowned while fording the Darling in flood soon after he gave Marney his letter to me, and Marney himself was as reticent about his past career as man could be.

All that he ever let me know was that he was born in Ireland, had lived some time in France, and had held a commission in a cavalry regiment; and these facts were not directly told me—except that he was an Irishman and that his home was in County Kildare; and this I, in truth, rather doubted, for he had no trace of a brogue, and his eyes were not blue as an Irishman's should be. He spoke of his "troop" once or twice, and he certainly had a military seat in the saddle. As for his having lived in France—he frequently, in his more sociable moods, referred to various friends in Rouen and showed a rather more intimate knowledge of that city—where I once spent a month—than as short a visit as that could have given him. But whenever I asked him—and quite innocently enough—anything about his life, he would half close his eyes and look hard at me for a few seconds, then say with a jerk of his broad shoulders: "*Pourquoi?*" and change the subject. Occasionally it seemed to me that his expression and manner were those of a hunted man, so alert was he to the slightest sound and so curious as to its cause; and he always carried a revolver. But I am no great judge of character, and the latter habit I attributed to the well-known ideas with which all "new chums" begin their bush life.

What annoyed me most was his continual disparagement of the country which he had apparently come to of his own free will, and which I supposed he was quite at liberty to leave whenever he got tired of it, for he

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never wearied of quoting in his sneering way a sentence of Marcus Clarke's: "A land where the trees give no shade, the birds have no song, the flowers no scent, and whose animals have not yet learnt to walk on all-fours." "Benighted—behind the times a million years," he would add, and I only provoked him to further condemnation and more vehemence when I pointed out that locomotion on two legs was surely an advanced evolution of that upon four—at least, it was in the life of man. So I ceased to defend my native land, which I believed quite able to look after itself, and merely expressed the hope that in time he would become acclimatised in mind as well as body.

There he sat, gazing silently, as was his wont, at a ring on his left hand, turning and twisting it so as to get the light upon every part in turn of the blue stone with which it was set, as if some hidden secret lay therein which might by chance disclose itself some day to his unwearied watching.

At length he said in a grumbling tone and without raising his eyes: "What is a sunset without clouds? Not worth my looking at; and no sign of rain to interest you."

I made no reply, and neither of us spoke for about five minutes, when suddenly he leapt from his chair and cried out: "Ha! At last! I knew it would be soon. Do you see? Do you see?" And he pointed excitedly at the ring on his finger at which he was staring fixedly.

"Do you see how green that stone has turned? I must leave you soon and go back to Rou—to England. That is my destiny." He was calm again, though his hand was trembling a little, and I examined the stone closely. It certainly had a greenish look about it, but I suggested that it might be the effect of the very yellow light of the sun upon the blue. He only laughed a short, dry laugh, and was about to sit down again, when he gave another start, threw his head up, opened wide his eyes, and said quickly in a low whisper: "What's that?"

I listened, but could hear nothing.

"There's someone coming," he added.

I strained my ears—watching him at the time—but could detect no sound but his rather heavy breathing. His right hand was behind him, and he quickly drew his revolver as a dog suddenly appeared at the end of the verandah. It was a collie bitch, and she stood watching us for a few seconds, and then quietly trotted up to me, taking no notice of Marney as she passed him, beyond giving him a sidelong glance, and, as I thought, rather avoiding him. She came to my side and put her nose in my hand, standing perfectly still. I patted her head and said: "And whose dog are you?" Her tail moved good-naturedly, and I stooped to examine her collar. It was made of green hide, and there was a round copper disc riveted to it that looked like a penny from which the inscription had been erased by rubbing it on a stone, and the letters "J. W." were roughly engraved in its place. Marney had walked to the corner of the house and was looking for the owner.

"Some sundowner, I suppose," he said, "who is making himself at home in the kitchen by this time."

I went in search, the collie quietly following me, but could find no trace of anyone, nor had Jimmy, the knockabout hand, seen or heard any signs of a stranger about.

"Where's your master, old woman? Find him—hie on!" I said, waving my hand. At this the dog gave a sharp bark and scampered off about fifty yards to the north of the house and stood there watching me. "Find him!" I cried. "Go on!" She simply barked at this—looking first at me and then behind her.

"She wants us to foller 'er, that's plain enough," said Jimmy. "Shall I go and see what it is?"

"No," I replied. "Stick the saddle on old Bendigo, and I'll go," and I was soon jogging along at a boundary-riding canter, with the collie giving me a lead of twenty lengths, and ever and again turning her head to utter a word of encouragement in the shape of a short bark. When I had gone about three miles, I pulled up, seeing she had done the same—and "Coo-ee'd." Back came an answering "Coo-ee" at once, and she immediately disappeared in the scrub, barking loudly. I followed the sounds and soon came upon an old man sitting under a ti-tree with his swag beside him.

"Hullo! what's up?" I asked.

"I put my foot in a rabbit-hole about half a mile back, and think I've sprained my ankle."

"And you sent your dog to tell me?"

"I think Nan went of her own accord while I was asleep—I didn't miss her till I woke up."

"Are you footing it to Sydney, or looking for a job?" I inquired.

"Sydney," was his curt reply; "and I hope for the last time."

"Well, get up," I said. It was quite evident he couldn't walk, for he could hardly

"'Hullo! what's up?' I asked."

stand, so I helped him into the saddle, strapped his swag to it, and led Bendigo back to the station. On the way, in answer to my questions, he told me that his name was Jake Webster, that he was making his thirteenth attempt to get to Sydney, that he might ship before the mast to some English port and spend his last days in the Old Country. As we drew near the homestead, I could see Marney standing in the verandah where I had left him, watching us intently as we approached. As soon as he had given the old man a good look, he turned on his heel and went into the house with an air of relief.

Webster's foot must have been hurting him a good deal, for he fainted the minute Jimmy and I got him into a chair on the verandah. Marney came out again and stood by indifferently to watch our operations. When the old man's boot was taken off, there was no doubt that his ankle was very badly sprained, and that he wouldn't be able to walk for some weeks, so we gave him a bed in the saddle-room, and told him to stay at Hope Springs until he was all right again. Not that there was much chance of his walking off before that—but I had taken a liking to the old fellow and wanted to make him feel comfortable.

"The first time I ever saw anyone but a Chinaman carry money in his boots," was Marney's remark on sitting down to supper; "and he soon recovered, I noticed, when you began to touch them."

During the next few weeks Marney's manner and actions were stranger than ever. For days he would be absolutely silent, then he would have a spell of gaiety and go about the house singing and whistling what he said were old French airs, but which seemed to me to have very little tune in them. Then he would shut up again and mope by himself about the stockyard. When he did speak, it was about his going away, which he said would be about Christmas; but he would not fix a day for his departure, saying that he wasn't really feeling well enough to go yet awhile.

As Webster's leg began to mend he used to hobble about and do what odd jobs he could find, seeming to want to earn his board and lodging in some way, and to show his gratitude, which I am sure he felt for the sympathy my few little kindnesses showed him. In the evenings he used to tell Marney and me stories of his past life in the bush, and what his plans and hopes were for the few remaining years of his life. He was born in Lancashire; and when he was

three years old, his father, a cotton spinner, driven to desperation by hunger and want, the result of some labour troubles at the time due to the introduction of machinery, had stolen a sack of flour and been transported for life. Fifteen years later his dying mother had made him promise to go to his convict father in Australia with a message of her love and devotion, and he had straightway set out for Botany Bay.

He had found his father on his death-bed, but was in time to deliver the message and see him die in peace and happiness. Then he went up country and had never set eyes on Sydney since; but the one hope of his life had been to go home to England, see his mother's grave, and be buried by her. Time after time at intervals of three and four years, during which he had carefully saved all his wages, had he set forth on his journey, but had never been able before this to keep clear of the shanties, and it had been the old, old story with him, of putting up at the first grog-hut he came to, and steadily drinking in fire-water all his hard-earned savings until there was nothing left but for him to turn back and put in another three years of boundary riding and shearing. Many a shanty had he passed this time, whose keepers, recognising an old customer, and a good one, had almost resorted to force to persuade him to turn in and drink. But he was safe so far now, and had only four days' walking to take him to Barnacool, whence the coach started for Black Swamp, the nearest railway station, on the line to Sydney.

On December 22nd he left Hope Springs, so as to be in Barnacool on Christmas Day. We had fed him well, filled his swag with food, and told him where he might find water on the way, and the old chap walked off, with Nan by his side, as happy as a king. During the whole time he was with us Nan had hardly left him for a minute; she was his only pal in the world, he said, and had saved his life once before the day she led me to him. When they were nearly out of sight, I saw her stop and look back for an instant, and then turning again, she and her old master were soon lost to view.

Naturally enough, that evening I began to talk to Marney about our two late guests, and said I hoped old Jake would have his dearest wish gratified; but I was rebuked.

"I am afraid I don't feel the slightest interest in him. I am too much occupied with my own plans for the future to care twopence about his," was his remark.

"And what might they be?" I asked, surprised at my boldness in doing so.

"I leave early to-morrow morning for Sydney; and if you can let me have my two horses by then, I shall be much obliged."

It must be said that this was rather short notice; but I was really so relieved at the idea of his going—his behaviour had been so disagreeable of late — that I readily acquiesced, and told Jimmy to have his saddle and packhorses ready by sunrise. When I awoke next day, he had gone, without a word of thanks for anything I had done for him—without even saying "Good-bye."

What I thought of him I needn't say now. I was alone again and I did miss him at first a good deal; but we got through more work without him, and in time I ceased to think of him at all.

Christmas Eve came, one of the hottest days I can remember. Rain was wanted badly: the sheep were dying all over the run; everything was literally burnt up. About midday Jimmy came in to tell me that a few clouds which had appeared in the morning—white ones, and miles away from the earth which desired them so — were darkening a little and getting nearer. Four or five hours later a slight breeze sprang up, but soon died away without a sound. Yet this was enough to give us hope; and when a little later the air began to get sticky, we knew that rain was coming—more or less of it—that night. And it did come. Without a breath of wind apparently to bring it, it suddenly poured down upon the parched ground in torrents. Huge black thunder-clouds darkened the sky and shed seas upon seas, as it seemed, almost before one could realise what was happening. Thump — thump — thump it fell at first upon the soft dust of months; then splash, and sounds of pouring, rushing water everywhere. I lit my lamp and sat down in the chair Marney used to prefer, to listen to that heavenly music.

What was that? A curious sound of scratching at the door—a pause—and it was repeated with a low moan. "I hope to goodness that isn't wind," I said to myself as I went towards the window; "for we may as well have as much rain as there is in the sky to-night, here where it is most needed." I opened the door and stepped out on to the verandah. Not a breath of wind, and nothing to be seen or heard but the rain—the rain—the rain. I had just thrown myself again into my chair and was beginning to wonder whether the new dam would hold water all right, when for the third time I

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heard the same scratching and scraping at the door. I threw it wide open, took the lamp on to the verandah and looked carefully for marks and for some cause of the noise, but could find nothing. I was on the point of closing the door, when from far out in the rain there came a long, melancholy howl, a weird kind of inhuman wail that so startled me I almost dropped the lamp. However, after listening intently for an hour and hearing nothing more, I put it down to imagination and went to bed. But not to sleep. For a long time I lay awake, wondering what that cry could have been, until at last the comforting sound of Heaven's down-pouring lulled me into unconsciousness. About daybreak its sudden stopping awoke me, and I rose hurriedly to see the effect of the night's work and look out for any leakage there might be in the tanks or dams. I could find no trace or sign of anything to explain the noises that had so mystified me, and they soon passed from my mind altogether.

* * * * *

The Old Year out and the New Year in—and the New Year nearly out again! For twelve uneventful months had passed very quickly with the best of seasons that had ever been known at Hope Springs, and it was already Christmas Eve again! Could it be possible? Yes! For time flies like a wild turkey when all goes well, and I had almost forgotten to count the days in their prosperity. My accounts for the closing year were completed, and I congratulated myself and the owner on the very handsome balance standing to his credit, as I put the books on their shelf. It was getting late, but before turning in I thought I would just have a look through the diary I had begun two years before on my arrival at Hope Springs. The entries which were not connected with the business of the run struck me for the first time as having mainly to do with the taking of life in some way or other, and I rather reproached myself with having been the means of killing—however justifiably—so many of God's creatures.

"January 9th.—My mare Polly, that I bought for £20 at Barnacool on my way up, broke her leg in a water-hole. Had to shoot her.

"March 28th.—Shot a brace of wild duck on Howard's Billabong.

"March 31st.—Found two cast sheep in the home paddock and shot them.

"April 14th.—Caught an eagle-hawk in a rabbit-trap. Jimmy is going to stuff it for me.

"April 30th.—Killed a silver snake in the dry creek—five feet.

"May 1st.—Marney arrived.

"May 15.—Marney and I shot fifteen rabbits each."

And so on.

The next entry that I paused over was "November 7th," describing the finding of Jake Webster with the aid of Nan. Then came "December 22nd.—Jake Webster and his dog Nan left for Barnacool. December 23rd.—Marney left early in the morning without saying 'Good-bye.' December 24th.—Christmas Eve. Splendid rains at last. Began at five and lasted twelve hours. About 11 p.m. heard a queer scratching sound at the door, and a strange cry, as if about half a mile away. Couldn't understand it. Probably some effect of the rain in the dry watercourses."

My clock struck eleven as I read this. "Exactly a year ago to the minute," I said to myself; "but what a different night!" for the full moon was so bright and the sky so clear that one could see almost as far and as well as by daylight. I laughed aloud at the thought of my scare; but my laughter was cut short and the book fell from my nerveless hands as I sat almost paralysed—unable for a moment to move a muscle. The very same sound again! Scratch—scratch! And a long, low, piteous howl in the stillness of the night! What could it be? What could it mean?

I know that when I did open the door, it was done with some hesitation, for there was time for me to feel my heart ramming against my ribs as if it meant to crack one of them. Think, then, of the relief—nay, joy—that was mine when I beheld Nan crouching on the verandah and wagging her tail with delight at seeing me again! I recognised her at once and went towards her to stroke her old head and say: "How do you do?" But she jumped back and stood a few paces away from me and whined.

"Well, old lady?" I said. "Where's Jake?" and I looked across the moonlit plain for him. For answer Nan quietly moved a yard or two further and looked in the same direction. But there was no Jake to be seen; and when I repeated the question she scampered off as she had done a year before, and looking back at me barked once or twice, as if to say: "Step this way, please." I "Coo-ee'd" several times, but there was no response, and we mechanically walked round to the stable to saddle Bendigo, again wondering how far we should have to go to find the

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old man. "Poor old chap!" I thought. "He's never got as far as Sydney. Spent all his money long ago, I expect, and is working his way back to Cowley's Creek to begin saving again. Poor devil! Queer that he should strike Hope Springs again, though, as it's not in the track."

As I mounted Bendigo, Nan, who had silently watched me saddle him, gave a bark of approbation; but the old horse put his ears forward, snorted, and refused to move, and it was only by giving him several sharp digs with my heels and a smack with the whip that I got him to start. This behaviour of his was so unusual that at first I thought that he, like Nan, had something to say, and wished to make a distinct protest against being disturbed at night in this way; but after we had gone a mile or so he became so restless and fidgety, and sniffed at the pure air so hard, that I began to be rather anxious to know how my midnight ride was going to end. Could it be that Jake had left Nan behind, and that someone else now possessed her? If so, her new owner might not care to be introduced by his dog to a perfect stranger, and might resent my visit in more ways than one! But Nan's behaviour removed all my suspicions or fears, whichever they were, and she was evidently so much in earnest that I hurried old Bendigo on, hoping to solve the mystery as soon as possible. But it was not to be yet awhile, for after we had gone between five and six miles she was still ahead, and if I stopped, as we did two or three times, she would stand and whine and bark, and show her impatience to be on the move again. Bendigo didn't like this at all, and, whenever she did it, would start, throw up his head, and snort in fear.

Fifteen miles I thought quite far enough, but Nan did not, and so I decided to go as far as the big White Gum, which marked the twentieth from the homestead.

The night was a brilliant one—moon and stars doing their very best to make amends for the sun's absence, and though the shadows were black, the night was good enough to see anything worth seeing.

Nan began to increase her pace now, but I did not, and she was soon out of sight in the scrub. I pulled up to whistle for her, but before I could do so she seemed to know I had stopped, for she gave a howl that made Bendigo tremble, and soon appeared in the track again.

On we went, Nan every now and then whining; and, at last, as we were almost in sight of the White Gum, she positively began to cry—at least, I never heard anything more like the sound of a woman weeping. Her voice was almost human, and when at length we reached a small open space to the left of the track, it became so pathetic that I instinctively felt there was misery at hand. We had pulled up on the edge of what looked like a small clearing; it was in reality a bare patch in the scrub about an acre in extent, with an old dead tree standing near the middle of it.

Nan offered no objection to our stopping, and herself stood quite still between me and the tree.

I gave a short "Coo-ee!" expecting to hear old Jake answer it at once, but there was no reply. Again I called—Bendigo was listening for all he was worth—and my ears were straining their utmost to catch any sound that might come; but no, there was none. Again for the third time, and as loudly and as long as my lungs were able: again dead silence. Nan was listening, too, standing as still as a statue, her head lowered, her tail stiffened out straight, and her hair up.

"Where is he, Nan? Good dog, find him!" I said.

But she remained motionless, staring fixedly at the old tree trunk, which stood white in the moonlight, casting a deep black shadow beyond.

I jumped out of the saddle and was about to lead Bendigo forward, when Nan raised her head in the air, dropped her tail, uttered the most mournful moan I ever heard, and slowly walked with hanging head towards the tree. Bendigo started, swerved, reared, and broke away and galloped off in the direction of home. I heard the thud of his hoofs die away in the distance, and then I followed Nan, drawn as it seemed by some irresistible power to where she stood looking back at me with plaintive, sorrowful eyes close by the tree. As I approached it, I saw that in years gone by its trunk had been hollowed by the blacks with fire, making a wurley about eight feet across in which a whole family might live. When I was within half-a-dozen steps of Nan, she quietly walked inside, and I went to the opening and looked in. My heart stopped, the blood froze in my veins, and a cold sweat broke out on my face. I staggered and gasped, yet I could not move my eyes from the awful sight that met them—awful in its mystery as in its reality. For there in the bright light of the setting moon lay the skeletons of two bodies—of a man and a dog. Nan in the flesh had vanished, but

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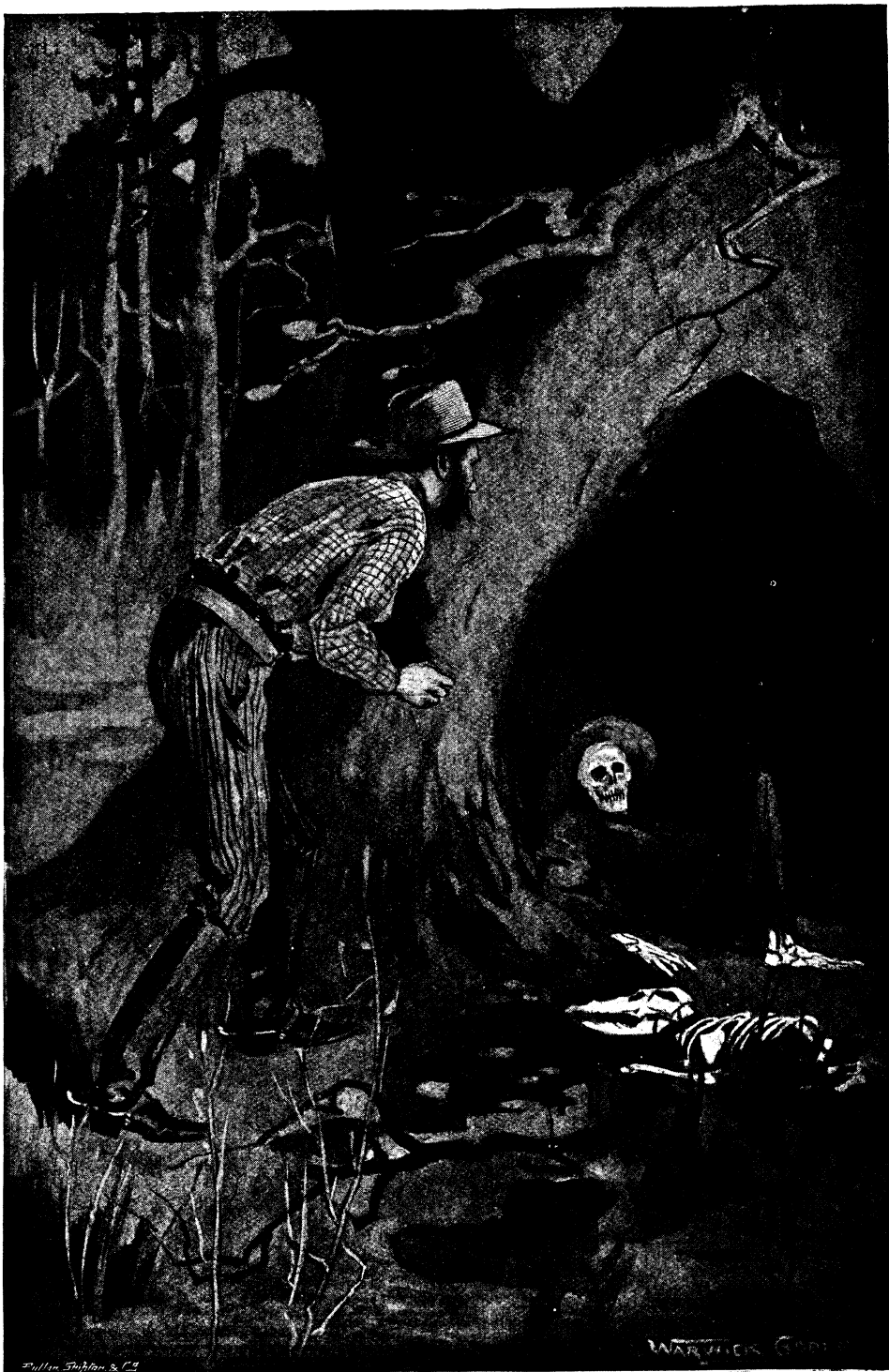

"I looked in."

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there rested her poor old bones by the side of her dear master's. Jake Webster, sure enough, in his cabbage-tree hat and moleskins, and Nan with her green-hide collar and the penny on it.

How long I stood gazing fixedly into the charred cavern of death I know not. I was roused by the familiar neigh of Bendigo, who had come back, and turning, I left the tree with its gruesome contents to mount him again. As I did so, my foot struck against something hard, and looking down, I saw an old blucher boot—one of Jake's, evidently—as both of his had been removed.

Riding homewards, I found it easy to solve the mystery of the old man's death. His ankle had given way again, he had crawled as far as his strength allowed towards Hope Springs, and, being unable to get any further, had died of starvation. And Nan had never left him. But the mystery of Nan's ghost I do not attempt to explain; it was one of those manifestations, I take it, which at times an all-wise Providence sees fit to make unto us, leaving us to marvel at it.

The next day Jimmy and I drove out to the White Gum and buried all that remained of the two comrades, but I saw no harm in keeping Nan's collar—which now hangs over my mantelshelf and recalls, whenever I look at it, the weirdest night's work that has ever been mine.

* * * * *

Five years later I read in the *Barnacool Standard and Mining News* that a prospecting party had found in the bush about thirty miles to the north-west of Barnacool—and nearly as far from any track, the skeleton of a man—on which there was nothing that might serve to identify it but a gold ring set with a green stone.

A billy-can that lay close by contained a bundle of banknotes, and on its outside was roughly scratched this strange inscription—

> Bushed—no water—dying. I shot Jake Webster for his money on Christmas Eve.
>
> JEAN MARNEY.

THE CASTLE.

I SAW a Castle in the fire,
And twenty Knights go riding in;
It had three turrets stiff and straight,
And a tower as thin as thin;
And, by its gates, a winding stair:
I knew some Witch sat watching there.

She had three jewels in her cap,
And two were fire, and one was flame;
And I knew the Flowers upon her breast
Were Those that Have no Name;
There was a Wind that blew her cloak
And turned her breathing into smoke.

I saw the windows flash with fire,
Because the Sun had fallen low;
And twenty Knights went riding out
Just as fast as they could go;
And though I blew with all my might,
They turned to ashes in their flight.

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.

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Photo by] [*Whitlock, Birmingham.*

RAILWAYMEN'S BRASS BAND, BESCOT NEAR BIRMINGHAM, L. AND N. W. R.

RAILWAY TOWNS.*

By CHARLES H. GRINLING.

ONE of the most striking features of railway employment is the way in which large bodies of men, engaged in the service of a single company, are grouped together so as to form, in several cases, the majority of the male population of the town in which they reside. Such towns as Swindon, Crewe, Wolverton, Horwich, and Eastleigh owe their existence, indeed, to the fact that they are great railway centres; whilst others, like Derby, Doncaster, York, and Gateshead, have taken on a new character since railway headquarters were established in their midst. Swindon, where the locomotive-, carriage-, and wagon-works of the Great Western are situated, has grown in sixty years from a village into a corporate town of 50,000 inhabitants, 13,000 of which are in the direct employ of the railway company, whose wages bill at this centre alone amounts to £16,000 per week. The centre of the educational and social activities of the town is the "G.W.R. Swindon Mechanics' Institution," which was "instituted on the 8th day of January, 1844, for the purpose of disseminating useful knowledge and encouraging rational amusement amongst all classes of people employed by the Great Western Railway Company." In pursuance of these objects, it provides circulating and reference libraries, reading-rooms—one of which, the newspaper-room, is probably the finest of its kind in the country—rooms for billiards, chess, draughts, and other games, a large hall for musical, dramatic, and other entertainments, a lecture-hall, in which series of popular lectures are annually given, and class-rooms for educational purposes. The subscription for Great Western men ranges from fourpence to tenpence per month, while persons not employed by the company are admitted on annual payments ranging from five shillings to twelve and sixpence. Lady members are welcomed, not only from amongst the female *employés* of the company, but also relatives and friends of the male servants; and a special ladies' reading-room is provided, which is furnished and equipped to suit the feminine taste.

In addition to the varied and constant everyday work of the institute, there are two great annual functions arranged under its auspices. The one is the juvenile *fête*, and the other the annual trip. The former is held in the Park—the gift of the railway company to the town—and usually takes place in August. A small charge is made for admission, and a "bumper" programme of attractions provided throughout the afternoon and evening set aside for the gala. There are stage performances at frequent intervals, a liberal programme of music by a first-class band, and a grand display of fireworks to wind up the day. Refreshments are provided free for the children, and last year's supply included no less than three tons of cake, each portion of which weighed 5 lb. and measured $8\frac{3}{8}$ in. × $5\frac{1}{8}$ in. × $5\frac{1}{4}$ in.

The annual trip usually takes place in

* This article is intended to be supplementary to the one on "Railway Employment" which appeared in the WINDSOR last month.

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July, and is the biggest thing in the way of excursions done in this country. By the generosity of the railway company, there are free trains in all directions, and everybody who can possibly leave home joins in the trip. Last year no less than 23,145 persons took part—13,401 adults and 9,744 children. There were three trains to Weston-super-Mare, five trains to Weymouth, three trains to London, one train to Winchester, one train to Birkenhead *viâ* Worcester and Chester, and another to Manchester *viâ* Birmingham and Crewe, three trains to South Wales, and four trains to Exeter, Newton Abbot, and Plymouth, making a total of twenty-one special trains in all, leaving Swindon between 4 a.m. and 7 a.m. on that eventful July morning. Some of the passengers returned the same day, others stayed away as long as a week, and all travelled free, provided they conformed to the regulations and used only the trains specified in the programme. Whatever may be the drawbacks of life in a railway town—and it cannot be said that such places are ideal for permanent residence—the opportunities which railway *employés* enjoy of getting away from home are unique. Apart from such special excursions as the Swindon annual trip, all servants of railway companies throughout the United Kingdom, with a few exceptions, enjoy the advantage of being able to obtain privilege tickets over the lines of any company affiliated to this scheme at one-quarter the ordinary fare. The salaried staff also receive free passes for their annual holidays.

Another most beneficent institution at Swindon is the G.W.R. Medical Fund Society, which has no less than eleven doctors on its staff, besides a dental surgeon, an assistant dentist, and seven dispensers. There is a well-appointed cottage hospital in connection with this society, which also owns a commodious dispensary, washing- and Turkish-baths, swimming-baths, hairdressing- and shaving-saloons, and a dentistry, and provides invalid-chairs for the benefit of its members. Subscriptions are also made through the funds to a number of hospitals and convalescent homes. Membership of this society is compulsory upon *employés* of the Great Western Railway Company in the town, and it is managed on a self-supporting basis by a committee of the members. It was established as long ago as 1847, and has done an incalculable amount of good work.

Photo by] [*Protheroe & Simons, Swindon.*

THE LARGE READING-ROOM, MECHANICS' INSTITUTION, SWINDON, G. W. R.

The London and North-Western Railway Company differs from the Great Western in not concentrating its plant works in a single centre. There are not one, but three "railway towns," on the North-Western system—*viz.*, Crewe, in Cheshire, where the company's locomotive and steel works are situated; Wolverton, in Buckinghamshire, the site of the carriage works; and Earlestown, in Lancashire, where are the wagon shops. Crewe Works were established in 1843, when the Grand Junction Railway Company's works were transferred thither from Liverpool, prior to which time the whole area now occupied by the town and works of Crewe was agricultural land. In 1844, the railway company provided the men with a library and reading-room, and gave a donation to purchase books. In 1845, this movement developed into the Crewe Mechanics' Institution, the management

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being vested in a Council, elected annually, of representatives nominated by the directors and members conjointly, and this system of electing the governing body has continued ever since. The original building of the institution was removed in 1846, and a larger edifice built by the company in its place, and this has been added to from time to time until it has reached its present dimensions.

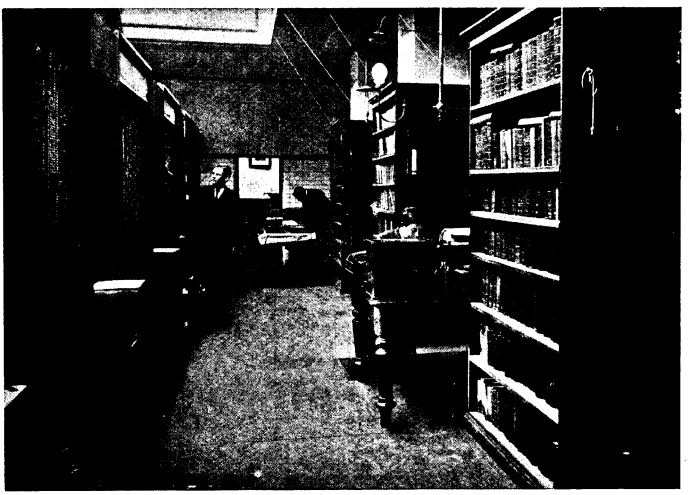

Photo by] [*Protheroe & Simons, Swindon.*

THE LIBRARY, MECHANICS' INSTITUTION, SWINDON, G. W. R.

The population of Crewe in 1846 was only a few hundreds, now it is upwards of 40,000. The men employed in the works were then 161, now they number about 8,000, besides large numbers of men employed in other departments of the railway company's service. It was in 1846 that the Grand Junction Railway was amalgamated with the London and Birmingham and Manchester and Birmingham Railways, under the title of the London and North-Western Railway. In 1849, evening classes for teaching reading, writing, arithmetic, and mechanical drawing were formed in connection with the Crewe Mechanics' Institution. These classes were added to from time to time, and they now cover the whole range of mechanical science and art, and all commercial and technological subjects applicable to the trade of Crewe. Nearly all the teachers of the various subjects taught at the institution are engaged in Crewe Works, and so have a thorough practical knowledge of what they teach to the students. Many of the teachers have received their education at the institution, and have been winners of important scholarships. It is evident, from the successful results obtained by the students, that the teaching has been of a high quality.

To keep pace with the growing demand for technical instruction, the directors of the London and North-Western Company have recently provided at Crewe an electrical engineering laboratory, equipped with all appliances necessary for teaching electrical engineering, and have arranged for a number of the apprentices in the works to spend one afternoon per week in this laboratory, in order to receive instruction, at the same time

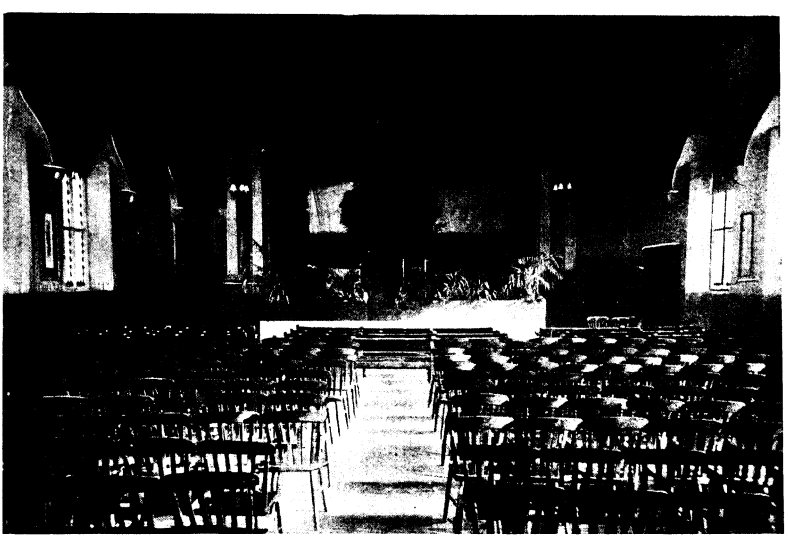

Photo by] [*Protheroe & Simons, Swindon.*

THE CONCERT-HALL AND BALL-ROOM, MECHANICS' INSTITUTION, SWINDON, G. W. R.

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paying their wages for the time thus occupied as though it were spent in the works at their ordinary duties. This laboratory is also utilised for evening-class students of the institution. A mechanics' shop is also attached to the institution, containing lathes, drilling machines, etc., worked electrically. The object of the company in establishing the Mechanics' Institution was primarily to give their young workpeople the advantage of a good education, so that they could be taught theory at the institution while they learned the practical part in the works. Membership of the institution has, however, always been open to non-*employés* resident in the town. The fees charged are merely nominal, and this is owing to the financial support contributed by the company, which is mainly derived from a portion of the entrance fees

Photo by] [*Protheroe & Simons, Swindon.*

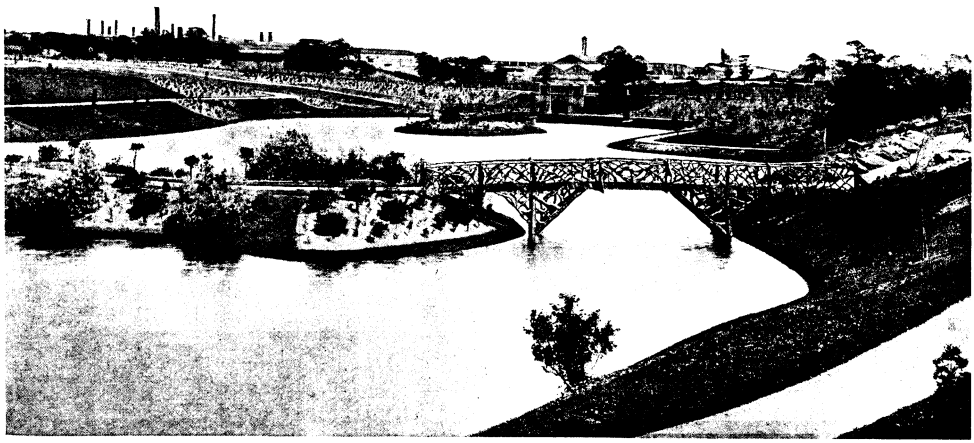
THE MEDICAL FUND SOCIETY'S DISPENSARY, SWINDON, G. W. R.

paid by apprentices (not the sons of *employés* in Crewe Works) for admission into the works, the sons of *employés* being allowed free admission. The Crewe institution receives national grants for educational results, but no grant is received from the local authorities, as the Cheshire County Council, the administrative authority, makes it a condition only to give grants where representation is allowed, and up to the present time the directors of the company have objected to any outside interference with the detailed working of the institution.

In 1855, in order to encourage students, the directors of the company gave a donation of £20 to be awarded in books, etc., as prizes for literary and scientific attainments, to servants of the company under twenty-one years of age employed in the locomotive department, and this amount has ever since been contributed annually for that purpose.

In 1888, the late Mr. Bartholomew Kean, an official of Crewe Works, left by will the sum of £8 annually, to be distributed as prizes to youths under twenty years of age employed in Crewe Works. In addition to these prizes, the late Mr. Ramsbottom, a former chief mechanical engineer of the company, and the late Sir Richard Moon, who was chairman of the company, endowed scholarships in 1874 and 1891 respectively, to be awarded to young men employed in the London and North-Western Railway Company's works, and these scholarships are, therefore, open not only to Crewe students, but also to the competition of students employed in the company's works on other parts of the London and North-Western system, such as the Wolverton Carriage Works and the Earlestown Wagon Works, at which places there are similar mechanics' institutions to that of Crewe, supported by the company. County Council scholarships, offered to the students in Cheshire schools, are also frequently gained by students of the institution; whilst scholarships such as the "Whitworth," "Royal," and "National," open to general competition in the country, are also competed for by the students, who have been successful in gaining many of them. The "Whitworth" scholarships, founded in 1869, may be considered the "blue ribbon" prizes of scholastic mechanical engineering, and since 1872, when the first of these was secured by a student of the institution, fifty-two "Whitworths" have been won by the students of the institution, all of whom were employed in Crewe Works.

The Crewe Institution is affiliated with the Union of Lancashire and Cheshire Institutes, the City and Guilds of London Institute, the Society of Arts, and the Board of Education. Each of these bodies holds examinations in various subjects, and awards prizes and certificates. The library in connection with the institution contains about 12,000 volumes, and to these new works are constantly being added. A patent-specification library is also maintained for reference by inventors. The news-room of the institution is supplied with all the chief newspapers, periodicals, and magazines published in the country, and



THE RAILWAY PARK, CREWE, L. AND N. W. R.

telegrams of the latest news are received and posted up there throughout the day. Coffee-, smoking-, and recreation-rooms are also provided for the members.

In 1863, the London and North-Western Railway Company established a small hospital at Crewe, there being no public institution of the kind within twenty miles of the place. The premises were extended from time to time, and in 1900 an entirely new hospital was built, with accommodation for sixteen in-patients. This hospital, which is situated inside the works, is entirely supported by the company, and the *employés* do not contribute towards its maintenance nor pay any fees as in-patients. The London and North Western Company also gave a site outside their works for the Crewe Memorial Cottage Hospital, and subscribed towards its endowment fund.

As a general rule, the houses in railway towns are not owned by the companies, it having been found better to leave the provision of dwellings for the workmen to private enterprise. The Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company, however, has built a model village at Corkerhill for its locomotive staff, where a population of about 806 people is lodged in eleven blocks of houses, the total number of separate dwellings being 120. Allotment gardens are also provided by the railway company, and an institute similar to those already mentioned. At Crewe, the London and North-Western has built and owns over 800 houses, and the Great Western has about 300 at Swindon, which is also about the number owned at Wolverton and Earlestown by the North-Western, which also has over 250 at Willesden and 120 each at Rugby and Watford. Altogether the

THE MEMORIAL COTTAGE HOSPITAL, CREWE, L. AND N. W. R.

last-named company has 5,152 houses and cottages occupied by members of its staff, the majority of which are let at rentals of from one shilling and sixpence to four shillings and sixpence a week. The privilege of living in a company's cottage is very much valued. Preference is, of course, given to such men as it may be necessary to call up in cases of emergency—the cottages being in close proximity to the lines—and in ninety-five cases on the North-Western there is electric-bell communication between the nearest station, or signal-box, and the cottage, so that the occupant thereof can be summoned to act as "fogman," or join a breakdown gang, at a moment's notice. Station-masters, too, are generally housed by the companies.

It is impossible within the scope of an article of this kind to make detailed mention of all the various institutions and societies which exist at great railway centres. Educational and social institutes similar to the ones already described are to be found at Wolverton and Earlestown (London and North-Western Railway), at Derby (Midland), at Stratford (Great Eastern), at Eastleigh and Nine Elms (London and South-Western), at Horwich (Lancashire and Yorkshire), and elsewhere. An interesting feature in connection with the Great Eastern Works at Stratford is the provision of a dormitory for the use of drivers and firemen who have come from a distance and require rest before returning to their engines. This dormitory, which is lighted throughout by electricity, is capable of accommodating, in separate cubicles, fifty men at one time, and it has had over 245,000 bed-occupants up to the time of writing. There are also bath-rooms, a smoking and reading-room, dining-room, kitchen, and clothes-drying-room. Mess-rooms, it should be stated, are provided at all large railway works, where the men can get their midday meal cooked and eat it in comfort. The dining-room erected by the Lancashire and Yorkshire at Horwich will accommodate 1,200 men, whilst this company has also provided an institute *café* for the clerks, etc., at Hor-

Photo by] [*J. L. Hart, Crewe.*

FOOTBALL TEAM OF CREWE ALEXANDRA ATHLETIC CLUB, L. AND N. W. R.

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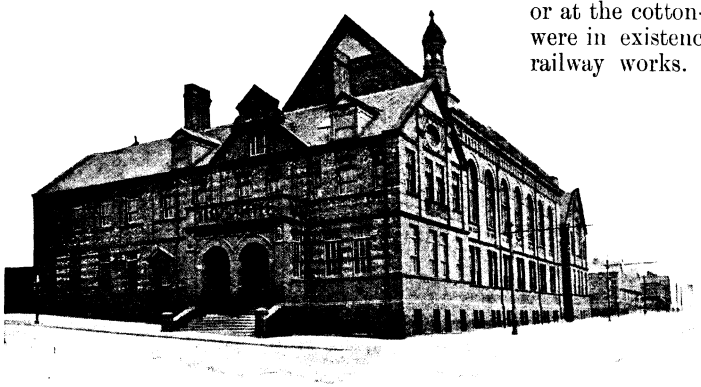
wich, where cooked meals may be purchased at net cost prices. At the large railway centres in London there is usually a clerks' dining club. At King's Cross (Great Northern) this institution includes billiard- and reading-rooms, to the equipment of which the company has contributed, as well as providing the premises. The North-Western has done the same at Euston. Railway parks are to be found at Crewe and at Horwich, as well as at Swindon, and cricket, football, rowing, bowling, and tennis clubs have been formed at most of the centres—in some cases on recreation-grounds provided by the companies.



MECHANICS' INSTITUTE AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS, HORWICH, L. AND Y. R.

Horwich, in Lancashire, and Eastleigh, in Hampshire, are two of the youngest of our railway towns, neither of them being yet twenty years old. When the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company's mechanical engineering works were established at Horwich in 1887, the population was under 4,000; now it is about 16,000, of which 10,000 to 11,000 are probably dependent upon the employment provided by the railway company, the remainder being occupied either as shopkeepers or at the cotton-mills and brickworks, which were in existence before the erection of the railway works. The number of actual *employés* of the railway company is nearly 4,000, and with the exception of eight houses occupied by officers of the company, these all live in houses not belonging to the railway property. A similar state of things exists at Eastleigh, as the railway companies in each case found that private enterprise was sufficiently alert to provide the additional housing accommodation necessary by the time the railway works were ready for occupation.

At both Horwich and Eastleigh the railway authorities have interested themselves keenly in providing technical education for their *employés*, and admirably equipped institutes exist at both centres. The Horwich institute was built by means of a grant of £5,000 made by the Lancashire and Yorkshire share-

INTERIOR OF WORKMEN'S DINING-ROOM, HORWICH, L. AND Y. R.

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holders, supplemented by the gifts of an additional wing and mechanical and engineering laboratories by Mrs. Samuel Fielden, of Todmorden, the widow of a director. Another director, Mr. Henry Yates Thompson, generously established a cottage hospital, whilst Mrs. Fielden has also built and endowed a covered gymnasium in connection with the institute. The large hall of the institute is fitted up as a theatre, in which entertainments and lectures are given. In 1890, about eleven acres of land were placed by the railway company at the disposal of the institute committee, who, with financial assistance from two of the directors (Messrs. H. Y. Thompson and W. Hinmers) laid it out as a recreation-ground, with which are associated cricket, football, bowling, and tennis clubs, all connected with, and governed by, the institute.

RAILWAY INSTITUTE, CORKERHILL MODEL VILLAGE, G. AND S. W. R.

Eastleigh, though it has grown in fifteen years from a village into a town of 9,000 inhabitants, is likely to become a much more important railway town in the near future. At present its activities are limited to the building and repairing of the carriage and wagon stock of the London and South-Western Railway Company, but a few years ago the company acquired an area of about 200 acres adjoining the existing works, on which the construction of locomotive shops has been commenced. When these are finished, about two thousand more men, with their families, will be removed from Nine Elms, London, where the locomotive works of the company are at present situated. The authorities of the South-Western have already had experience of how to manage a large migration of this kind, as fifteen years ago, when the present Eastleigh works were established, the men employed in the carriage and wagon shops had to be transferred from Nine Elms. The change will, of course, have to be made gradually, as the work of the locomotive department must be kept going all the time. When this transfer is completed, the Great Eastern will be the only large railway company having its plant works in the neighbourhood of London, and the removal of these from Stratford to a country centre is probably only a question of time. It may be stated that the Great Eastern Railway Mechanics' Institution at Stratford New Town is one of the best in the country, being thoroughly equipped both for educational and social purposes. The number of persons employed by the Great Eastern at Stratford exceeds 4,000, and it would be a serious thing for the locality should high rates and other local circumstances drive the company to remove its works elsewhere.

The numerous differences of creed existing in the United Kingdom have made it difficult for the railway companies to interest themselves, as such, in the provision of churches or chapels for the inhabitants of the towns called into existence by their activities. At Doncaster, fifty years ago, the directors of the Great Northern went so far as to promote a Bill in Parliament to empower the company to build a church, as well as schools, the then chairman of the railway declaring that he could not be content to see the children of the great population brought there in the company's service, running about the streets without having in a week a school to go to, or on Sundays a church for worship. The schools were built out of the company's money, but great opposition was raised at the shareholders' meetings to the church scheme, and eventually the Bill was withdrawn. A subscription was, however, opened amongst the shareholders who approved of their chairman's proposal, and in 1858 the edifice known as St. James's Church, Doncaster,

was opened. It has ever since been locally known as "the Plant Works' Church." At Crewe, Wolverton, Earlestown, and other places, the London and North-Western Railway Company has very largely subscribed towards providing churches and chapels for its *employés*. At Corkerhill—the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company's model village above referred to—religious services are conducted every Sunday in the large hall of the railway institute by ministers of churches in the vicinity and by members of the Railway Mission, a society whose object it is to minister to the spiritual needs of railway workers, and which is represented by one or more missioners at most large railway centres. There is also a Sunday-school at Corkerhill, with an average attendance of 110 children, and a Bible-class for young men and women, with an average attendance of 70.

CLERKS' AND WORKMEN'S CAFÉ, HORWICH, L. AND Y. R.

An advantage enjoyed by railway *employés*, which ought more properly to have been mentioned in last month's article, is the institution of savings banks in connection with the companies. The London and North-Western Railway Savings Bank, for example, which was founded on January 1st, 1895, gives interest at the rate of three-and-a-half per cent. per annum on sums up to £500, and two-and-a-half per cent. on sums over that amount, and deposits of one shilling and multiples thereof are received, not more than £50 being receivable upon a single account in any one year. The railway company is entirely responsible for all deposits, for the interest thereon, and for the cost of carrying on the bank. These institutions form a strong inducement to thrift amongst railway *employés*.

WORKMEN'S COTTAGES, HORWICH, ADJOINING MECHANICAL ENGINEERING WORKS, L. AND Y. R.

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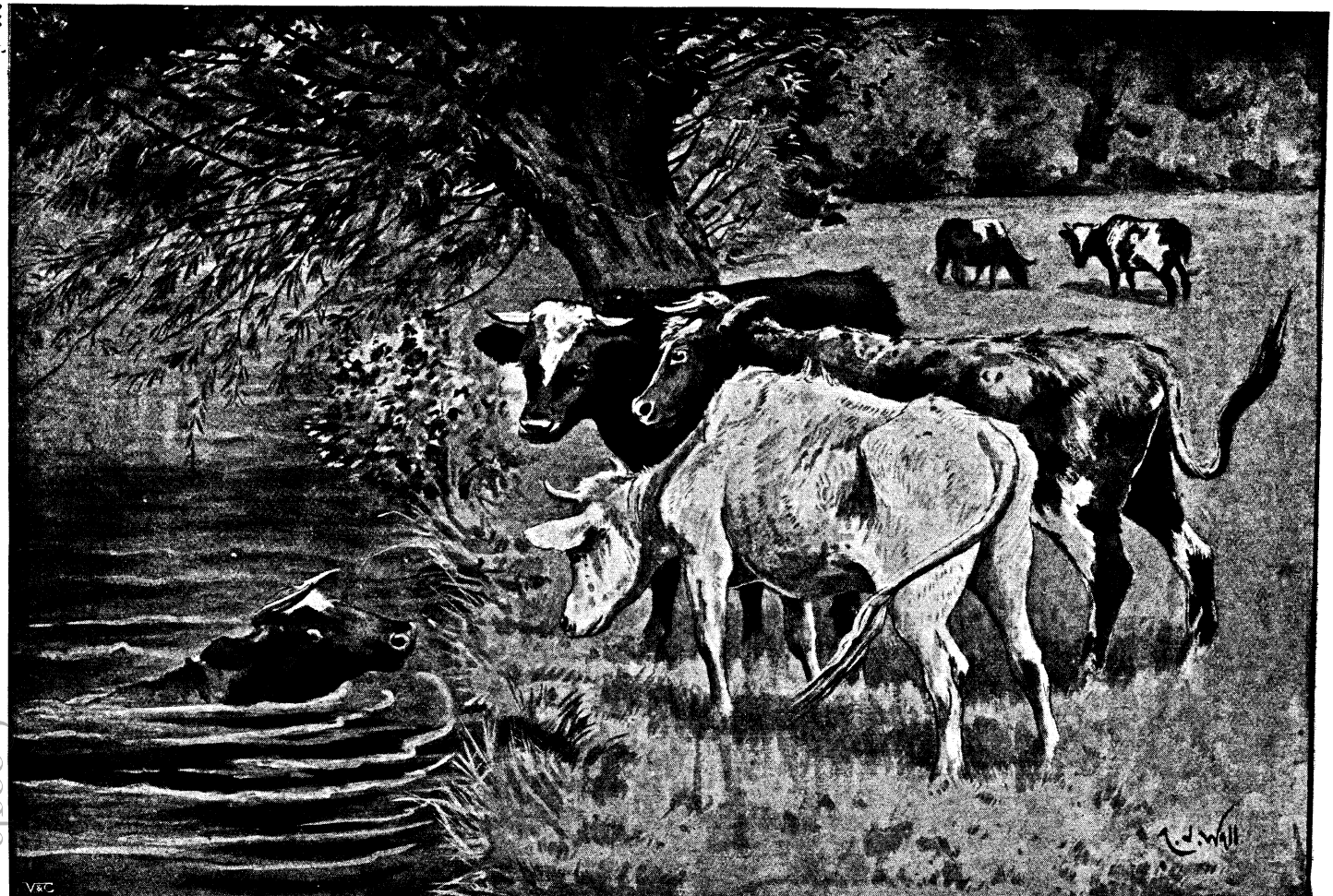

"SYMPATHY." BY A. J. WALL.

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A RECRUIT IN DIPLOMACY.

By JUSTUS MILES FORMAN,*

Author of "The Garden of Lies."

"AND then," said young Harrington impressively, "then the Quarter calls out '11–8–3–29,' or whatever the signal may be, and he chucks you the ball and you make a dive, with three or four chaps pushing you, for a hole in the line that your forwards are making. And if you get through it, eleven great big men pick you up and slam you on the ground, and kick you in the face when no one's looking, and try to kill you. Then you get up and do it all over again."

The girl shivered.

"It sounds very, very brutal," said she.

"Brutal?" considered young Harrington. "Brutal? Oh! I don't know. Of course, one's mother and one's maiden aunts think it brutal, but—it's a fine game, anyhow," he declared enthusiastically, and dropped back in his deck-chair, a little fatigued with so much explanation of a thing that everybody knows about. But the girl shook an unconvinced head.

"It seems to me," she insisted, in her quaint, careful English, "a very strange and barbaric way of—of upholding the honour of one's university."

"Well, if you should ask me," cried young Harrington, sitting up to battle, "I call it quite as civilised as getting yourself up in a silly stuffed diver's suit and a French *chauffeur's* goggles, and letting another man slash at your nose and cheeks with a silly *Schläger!* I'd rather break a collar-bone or two with twenty-five thousand people looking at me and tacking my name on the end of a 'varsity cheer, than go through life with a face that would make people wonder whether I'd been in an explosion or had had a mix-up in a bar-room." He rose to his feet and stood over the girl, balancing himself to the roll of the ship, and frowning down upon her with pretended severity.

"You Germans are doubtless a very estimable people," said he, "and I'm not saying that you aren't fine gymnasts and mountain-climbers—and I'm not saying that you haven't jolly good beer, either; but you will never be a proper nation, you know, till you learn to play football."

He tucked the plaid rug more snugly about her feet and strolled off down the deck towards the smoke-room, aft.

He wished that he might have stopped longer, but was greatly afraid of boring the girl, and would not allow himself to risk it. She always seemed glad enough to have him drop down in the vacant chair next hers—indeed, of late she had seemed even to welcome him with a certain little eagerness; but, on the other hand, he often discovered, while he was in the midst of a story, that the girl's eyes were turned away from him, out over the swaying water, and that she was obviously *distraite* and occupied with something far beyond him.

Of course, this always drove him away at once and reduced him to sitting in a corner of the smoke-room and calling himself names, but it seemed unable to keep him away from the girl for any long stretch of time.

She was not very pretty—certainly not beautiful, after the Anglo-Saxon's standard—though she had surprisingly fine grey eyes and magnificent hair; but there was about her a certain atmosphere, a wholly unconscious air of distinction, which made her conspicuous among the many sorts of women on board the ship and seemed to hold her in a measure aloof from them. An older and more experienced man than young Harrington would have noted this air and have given it more significance. Young Harrington merely approved of it in a vague fashion, and said to himself, in the language of a certain London music-hall song, that the girl was very evidently "class."

Further, there was something hauntingly

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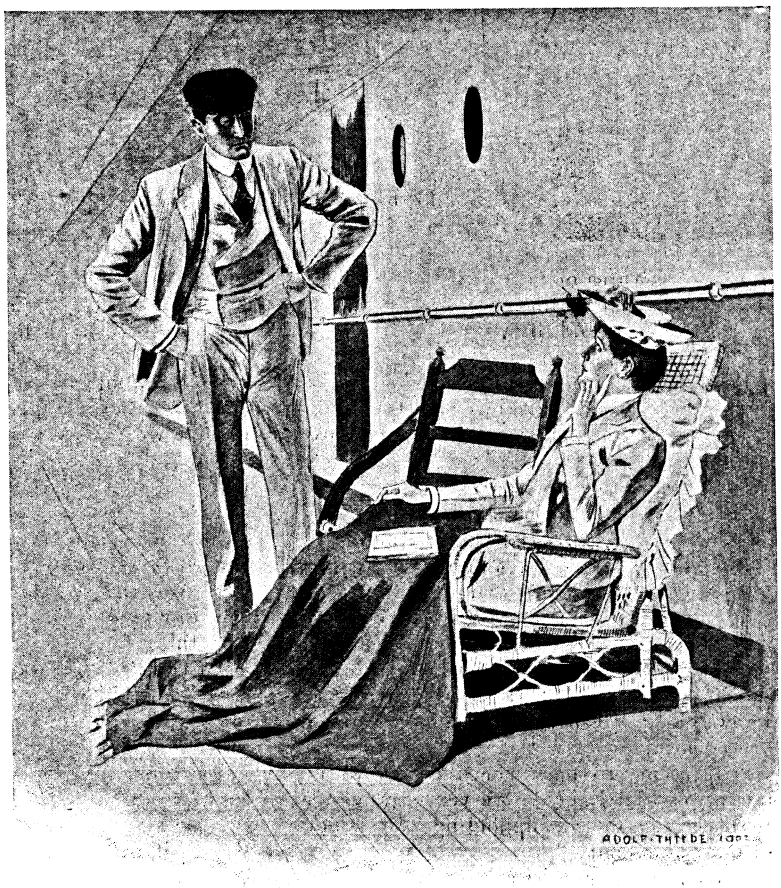
familiar about her face, but so vague and faint that it baffled him quite. As a matter of fact, her face might have been familiar to almost anyone who read the European illustrated prints or frequented the photograph-shops. Of course, young Harrington could not be expected to know this, though.

He let himself into the smoke-room, which was very cosily broken up into corners and angles and recesses, so that one might be quite alone even with a dozen or a score of other men in the room. He chose an unoccupied corner and stowed himself away in it with his pipe and a brandy-and-soda. A little heap of newspapers—a Paris *New York Herald*, a *Temps*, a London *Daily Telegraph*, a *Gaulois*, and a *Neue Freie Presse* lay scattered upon the leather seat near, and he pulled them towards him, remembering that Austrian mix-up which had been filling everyone's attention just before he left Paris to join the ship at Boulogne—it was a Dutch steamer sailing from Rotterdam.

He found it given a generous amount of space—the illness of the Emperor, the old fear of a dismemberment of the Empire in the event of the Emperor's death, the quarrel with Franz Ferdinand, and the rumours that the long-banished Archduke, the famous Johann Orth, was really not dead at all, but was living somewhere in America, and that he was to be sent for. Young Harrington knew very little about Austrian politics, and cared no more. He let the journal slip from his knees to the floor unnoticed, and his mind went back to the German girl with the fine eyes and the little air of hauteur which had kept everyone but himself at such a distance.

A man strolling lazily through the smoke-room peered into the secluded corner, and at young Harrington's nod and smile dropped down in a chair across the little table. It was the Swiss lieutenant, Kärstelen, with whom young Harrington had often walked the deck, and of whom he highly approved. It is impossible that one should play four years of Yale football, the last of them as captain of one's team, without being able to form a quick and rather accurate judgment of men—in respect, at least, to their executive ability. Young Harrington looked at the Swiss lieutenant's grey eyes, with their trick of turning all at once hard and cold and steady, and at the set of his jaws and at the line of his mouth, and picked him for a man who would play a hard and aggressive game from the kick-off, and would be playing a harder game at the end of the second half



"He rose to his feet and stood over the girl."

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than in the beginning. He liked the man's quiet alertness and the air of perfect adequacy which hung over him and made one quite certain that he would prove quite equal to any occasion. It was because the Swiss was the type of man that he most admired that he had tried to see as much of him as possible since the beginning of their smoke-room acquaintance, and he was very glad at this moment to have him happen in.

"Fine day!" said he originally. "What'll you have? Gin, steward—gin, dry."

"It is not a fine day," objected the Swiss lieutenant. He spoke perfect English with an excess of care and with occasional strange idioms. "There is too much sea," he complained, "and I am a bad sailor. If this goes on, I shall probably be ill. It takes the—the powder out of one."

He lifted one of the old newspapers idly and looked at its first page.

"Nothing but the Austrian affair," he said, with a little yawn. "Austria-Hungary is a sort of bomb with a time-fuse—the time uncertain. When it explodes, the bits will be gratefully picked up by several people, but they will not be put together again."

Young Harrington laughed. "I know very little about Austrian affairs," said he. "I suppose there will be a smash when the old Emperor dies, won't there? D'you suppose this archduke chap, Johann, is really alive? I thought he disappeared ten or fifteen years ago."

The Swiss lieutenant struck a match and lighted a cigar which he drew from a little glass tube.

"Johann was supposed to have been lost at sea," he said presently, "rounding Cape Horn, on board a chartered ship with the woman he married against the Emperor's wishes. There have been rumours ever since that he is living in one place or another—*incognito*, of course. It may be. I cannot say."

"Well," said young Harrington, "it's no good pretending that I care whether he is alive or not, for I don't. All I care about for the present is making these next three days go, somehow. Being at sea is a great bore. There's nothing to do but walk or sit about. You couldn't get up a bit of excitement, could you, just for my sake?"

The Swiss lieutenant smoked in silence for a long time, with the grey eyes fixed upon young Harrington's face. The eyes were narrowed a bit, and he did not smile. Then, at last, he leaned forward, with his arms upon the little table, and his eyes still fixed very keenly upon the younger man.

"I have been in America already three times," he said, "and I have watched the American customs and the American universities—even their sports. I know what it means to play your feetball—the training, the work, the endurance, the judgment. I have known old men of affairs, bankers, advocates—what you will—who would offer a coveted place in their office or their counting-room to one of your feetball heroes because they felt that the boy had received a very valuable training in—in initiative, in—grit, in judgment of men. It seems strange, but it is so. Yes?"

Young Harrington coloured a little and gave an embarrassed laugh.

"Oh, yes," said he. "Yes, I suppose so. Yes, I've known it to be done. Why?" He looked back at the Swiss with puzzled eyes. There was a certain gravity in the other man's manner which he did not at all understand.

"There is something to be done," said the Swiss lieutenant, after another pause and looking away, "something of importance which I must do before this voyage is over. I should like the help of such a man as you are. The ordinary man is out of the question. You have been trained to be cool and swift in danger and to have no nerves. I should like your help."

"What the dickens——" cried young Harrington softly, "what the dickens can you find of that sort on board a trans-Atlantic liner? What are you going to do?" He gave a little, amazed, scoffing laugh, as if he thought the other man was poking some grave joke at him. But the Swiss lieutenant's face did not relax.

"You know something of men," said he. "Am I a common thief? Would you pick me out for the sort to rob a fellow-passenger of his watch or his pocket-book?"

Young Harrington laughed again.

"No," said he, "no, you are no common thief. I know very little of men, but I know enough for that. What then?"

"This," said the Swiss lieutenant. "I shall be a thief before the voyage is over. There is on board ship a la—a passenger who bears certain documents from—from some conspirators in the South of Europe to agents in America. These documents must never be delivered. If they reach their destination, incalculable harm will be done to a whole nation, perhaps to all of Europe. Do you understand? I must steal them.

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They cannot be seized openly, for the affair must not be known. There are officers of the secret service watching every west-bound ship. I was detailed to this vessel, and to me the prize falls—the prize with its grave responsibility. I must not fail."

He paused a moment to relight his cigar, and young Harrington noted that his fingers shook a little and that his strong face was a bit pale.

"I must not fail," he said again. "I cannot explain to you the importance of the thing, because you know nothing of the circumstances."

He ceased speaking once more, and his grey eyes, a bit brighter than usual, glittering with a certain new excitement, challenged the man across the table.

Young Harrington twisted uneasily in his chair and scowled into the eyes that held him.

"Why, Heaven bless you!" he cried irritably, "do you realise what you're asking of me—do you? Do you realise that you're asking me to steal—*steal* like any beggarly sneak thief—from some chap who's never done me any harm? What possible excuse have I? *I* don't know anything about your political mix-ups; *I've* nothing to do with them. It may be all right for you to search a fellow-passenger's luggage and get away with his papers, but—— Oh, I say!" He coloured again and gave a little, embarrassed laugh. "How do I know this is—is all right?" he demanded. "How do I know that you're not after somebody's bonds? What right have I to take your word and commit a crime by it? Oh, nonsense!" He took a long gulp of his brandy-and-soda and looked up once more at the man across the table, still with his little, embarrassed, deprecatory laugh.

The Swiss lieutenant dropped back in his chair with a quick sigh.

"I am sorry," said he. "Yet you are quite right; it is absurd. You have no right to commit a crime with only my word to go upon. I beg your pardon. It was your asking for a bit of excitement that led me to speak—that and what I knew of you—and my desperate need for a cool, steady head to help me. I must do the thing alone, even if I am caught. What is about to happen must never happen. To prevent it is worth many times my life!"

He shook his head at the younger man with a little, wistful, apologetic smile. "You are quite right," he repeated; "I was mad to suggest such a thing to you. Again I ask your pardon."

Young Harrington set his elbows upon the little table, leaning over upon them, and his eyes, like those of the other man, had narrowed and become very hard and keen and bright.

"I told you a moment ago," said he, "that I knew little of men, and that is true. You may be contemplating a perfectly ordinary bit of robbery, for which you need an accomplice; but I think not. If this thing is as you say, it is much more important than one young man's scruples and suspicions. If it is as you say, and I'd refused to go into it with you, I'd have a pleasant thing to look back upon, wouldn't I? I'd be proud of myself, wouldn't I? Will you tell me a bit more? Will you try to explain? What is there that I can do?"

The Swiss lieutenant leaned forward eagerly and spoke without pausing for nearly half an hour, while young Harrington smoked and listened and nodded his head.

When the younger man at length arose and made his way out to the wind-swept deck, there was a slight flush on his cheeks and a singular brightness in his eyes. Just inside the door which opened upon the starboard promenade, he passed three of his casual smoke-room acquaintances seated about a table and playing pinochle. They called to him cheerily, and Holzmann, the stout German, tried to pull him down in the vacant chair to make a fourth at the game; but young Harrington shook his head, laughing, and said that he wanted a bit of good, fresh air out on deck. He stood a few moments chaffing with the jolly old German and with De Vries, the Belgian diamond merchant; but he was uncomfortably conscious of the fact that the third man, Baron Friedman, was sitting back in the shadow and watching him very keenly. He wondered why. He had never greatly cared to cultivate the Baron. The man had a rather coldly repellent air, and the keenest eyes that he had ever seen in any human being.

He broke away at last and went out to the promenade-deck, where he walked up and down for a long time.

"I'll do it, by Jove!" he cried under his breath; and he said the words over and over to himself many times, as if the sound of them gave him a certain courage. "He may be a liar and a common thief, and I may be a common dupe, but I don't believe it. By Jove, I'll do it! The whole thing's outrageous, but Kärstelen's too much in earnest to be faking. What if it should be true, and the whole thing went to pot for lack of my help? I've got to do it!"

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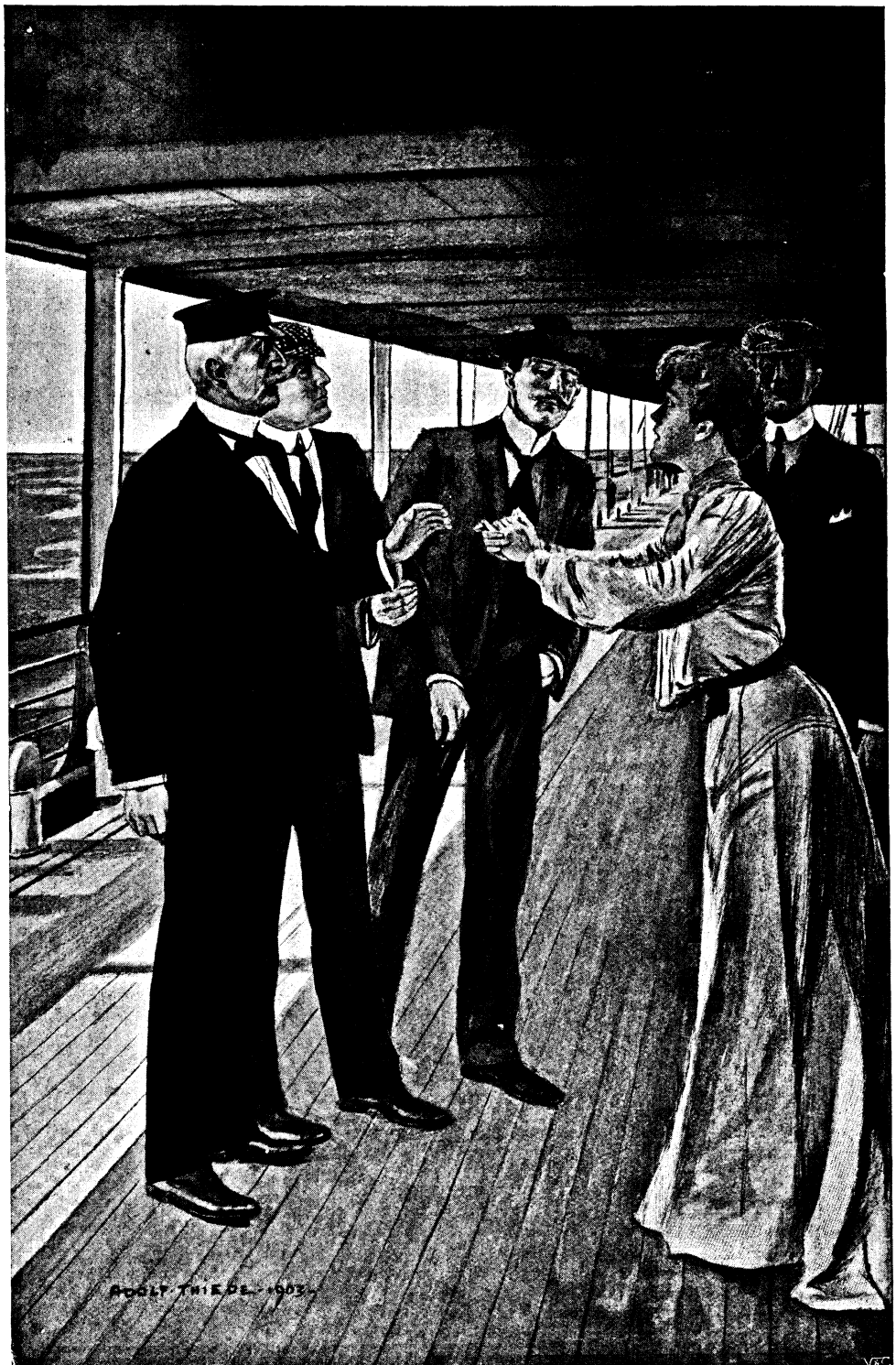

"'Oh, Colonel, Colonel!' she cried to Baron Friedman, 'the papers! They are gone—stolen!'"

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It was, as he said, outrageous—the whole affair—and a man of greater age and experience would have laughed at it, or at once told the purser that the ship's company contained a dangerous thief; but it must be remembered that young Harrington was very young indeed—only a year out of his university—and that, like all very young men, he greatly prided himself upon his judgment of character. Also, the very preposterous daring of the thing, the melodramatic romance of it, appealed to him strongly.

"I'll do it!" he said once more, with a little nod of decision, and went up forward to where the German girl with the fine eyes still lay, wrapped up, in her long deck-chair.

It was eleven o'clock the next morning when young Harrington and Lieutenant Kärstelen stood together in one of the corridors down on the saloon deck forward. The deck was so arranged that there were two long passageways, starboard and port, with occasional transverse connections. But from the crosswise connecting passage farthest forward a little spur ran out towards the bow, with four state-rooms opening upon it. The port-holes from the extreme two opened in the forward bulkhead of the deck-house, looking down upon the second-class deck and the bow of the ship. It will be seen that these cabins were peculiarly isolated.

"Now is our time," said the Swiss lieutenant. "Inspection has already taken place, and the people from all four of these rooms are out on deck or in the saloons. The stewardess who is assigned to this part of the ship is safe for half an hour. A passenger very carelessly stepped upon the edge of her skirt in the main companionway a moment ago, and tore it so badly that the woman has had to go to her own quarters for repairs. I was the passenger. Now, you know what you are to do. You will stop, at any cost, anyone attempting to enter this little spur passage, and you will do it with sufficient noise to attract my attention. Never mind how it is effected. You may have a fit on the floor if you like—anything to keep people away. Are you ready? By the way, the room I shall be in is the extreme one to the left, No. 84."

"All ready," said young Harrington. "Never you fear; I'll keep the coast clear. Remember, though, I'm to see the documents afterwards; that is only right and proper."

"Yes, yes!" said the other impatiently. "You shall see them—read them, if you like and if you can. At any rate, you shall make certain that they have nothing to do with money; and if you like, you can search my clothes, to be sure I have not picked up a diamond necklace or two! We will go at once to my state-room when I've the papers. Now, then!"

He slipped noiselessly back into the passage and unhooked the door of the state-room numbered 84. Young Harrington drew a quick little sigh, as one who braces his nerves for a strain. He had taken a stiff brandy, neat, just before coming below. Not that he was in the way of relying upon artificial means to meet a crisis, but as the time had drawn near, he had begun to realise that his nerves were in a most absurd condition of irritability. He could face an opposing football team before twenty-five thousand people with never a tremor, but this work was quite new to him. He had noticed that Kärstelen also had been seeking courage from a bottle; but the Swiss was on the verge of seasickness and needed some aid.

He moved out of the spur passage a bit and stood in the transverse corridor, very cool and alert and ready. He heard people stirring about in near-by cabins. He heard voices come up the long passages from the companionway amidships. Once his heart beat fast when someone came almost to the end of the corridor in which he stood; and he dropped weakly back against the wall when the passenger entered a room safely out of sight.

It seemed to him that he stood there many hours, straining his ears for a footstep which would mean danger, clenching his hands at his sides to keep them still. He had made several plans of action in case someone should attempt to pass him, and he was quite ready to employ even the most desperate of them, for he meant, at any cost, to do his share of the work faithfully; but this waiting was rapidly driving him into a nervous panic.

The chief coherent thought in his mind was an increasing anger at Kärstelen for being so long. Of course, young Harrington realised that the time which actually passed was much shorter than it seemed, but he was certain that at least a quarter of an hour had gone by—which was not so—and that he was almost at the limit of endurance.

Then, in the midst of his anger and impatience and nervous strain, something came to pull him up sharply and quiet his nerves to action. Someone was walking along the starboard passageway between the two rows of cabins—some woman, for Harrington could hear her singing softly

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to herself as she came. He had, from the first moment, a queer sense of absolute certainty that she was making for the spur passage.

He moved a little to starboard of the spur and stood waiting. When the woman turned the corner, he was down on one knee in the narrow corridor, adjusting a bootlace. He seemed not to see that he was in the way until the woman had paused a moment and waited, and at last had spoken.

"Oh, I—I beg pardon!" cried young Harrington, starting up. "I didn't see you—very stupid of me." He caught his breath sharply as he saw the woman's face. It was the young German girl with the fine eyes. "Very stupid of me!" he repeated. "I—was waiting for a friend who's in—in his cabin over on the port side," he explained. He stood very determinedly in the way so that the girl could not pass, and she smiled at him, half in amusement, because she mistook his attitude and his eagerness of speech for a tribute to her personal charms, as any woman might have done. So they stood for a little, chatting about quite ordinary shipboard topics, until young Harrington was interrupted by an easy, apologetic voice behind him and a hand on his arm.

"I beg pardon," said the other man. "May I pass? Thank you!" Young Harrington stepped aside with a breath of relief, and Lieutenant Kärstelen passed them, touching his soft cap to the girl.

But when he had disappeared around the corner, the German girl gave a little murmured exclamation of surprise and—it seemed to Harrington—concern.

"Who is that man?" she asked quickly. "Do you know who he is? What can he have been doing here in this passage? I am almost certain that all the occupants of those four rooms are women."

"Those four rooms?" said young Harrington in a queer voice. "Do you mean that you are quartered in one of those four rooms?"

"Why, of course," she said impatiently. "My room is No. 84. What can he have been doing there? Perhaps he was taking something to one of the other women. I wonder——"

Young Harrington stood shaking and dumb against the white-painted bulkhead. He knew that his face must be ghastly white, for it felt cold and damp; and the blood surged and beat terribly in his head and below his ears and at his wrists. If the corridor had not been half dark, as all corridors on board ship are apt to be, the girl must have noticed that something was wrong; but she was looking after Lieutenant Kärstelen, and, it seemed, taken up with her own thoughts.

Young Harrington heard a strange second self, as if from a very great distance, making ordinary and trifling remarks, and the phenomenon interested him somewhat, but only for a moment. His real being was in a storm and whirl of terrified dismay, of a dread which bound him, for the moment, cold and helpless. But always that curious second self babbled meaninglessly, with desperate lips, to the young German girl, and the girl answered as much at random as young Harrington spoke, but she moved nearer to the little spur passage, and he could see that her eyes were troubled and anxious.

When she had left him, disappearing into Room 84, young Harrington moved away down the corridor. He meant to go at once after Lieutenant Kärstelen—follow the man to his room and there take him by the throat and demand back what had been stolen. It was impossible that the thing should be as the Swiss had said. It was impossible that this young girl should be carrying such documents, on such a mission. The papers were probably bonds, private documents, something with which a thief might levy blackmail.

He found himself standing in the starboard companionway amidships and staring out upon the promenade deck with wide eyes that saw nothing. He had no notion of how he came there, or why. He even did not see his three pinochle-playing friends of the smoke-room march past, arm in arm, and peer curiously at his white face.

A rush of footsteps behind him brought him to himself. It was the young German girl with the fine eyes; but the fine eyes were wide and dark with terror now, and her face was as white as young Harrington's own. She was gasping for breath as if she had run a long way, and the hand that caught at young Harrington's arm shook most strangely.

"Mr.—Harrington!" she cried. "Mr.—Harrington! My—my papers! The man coming from my room—he was a—thief! Did you see his face? Would you know him again? Oh! call Colonel von Alt—I mean Baron Friedman! Call him at once! Will you bring him to me, please? Please! Ah! be quick!" A little break came into

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her voice, and the hand on young Harrington's arm shook again. Just at this moment the three pinochle-players of the smoke-room came once more marching past, arm in arm; but when they saw the German girl and young Harrington standing together in the companionway, they halted at once and came forward with suddenly grave, anxious faces.

The young German girl put out her arms towards them with a little low, sobbing cry.

"Oh, Colonel, Colonel!" she cried to Baron Friedman, "the papers! They are gone—stolen! A man was coming from my state-room when I went down, just now. This gentleman saw him. Oh, Colonel, the papers, the papers!"

Even in the midst of his amazement and dismay and shock, young Harrington noted with a sort of wondering admiration the bearing of the man who called himself Baron Friedman. He noted how immediately the man appeared to take command of the situation, and how the others waited for his word.

"Never fear, madam!" said he. "We'll have the papers back in half an hour. The thief cannot leave the ship. At the very worst, I still have the copies. Never fear, we'll have them back!" He laid his hand upon the girl's arm for an instant, with his grave smile, and young Harrington watched the worn, still face, and felt somehow soothed—assured. It never occurred to him to doubt what the man said. He was one of those strong, silent men whose words carry conviction.

Then the boy, even though he was very young and very foolish, showed that he was also a thoroughbred, for he became all at once cool and alert and steady at the need.

"This lady is right!" he said swiftly. "She has been robbed of certain papers by a passenger who calls himself Lieutenant Kärstelen, late of the Swiss Service. I helped him steal the things. I stood guard for him. He had lied to me, I think, about the nature of the documents. I can help you to recover them." He looked into Baron Friedman's keen eyes, and his jaw squared itself a trifle, for he was beginning to grow angry at the deception which had been played upon him.

"Will you come into the smoke-room a moment?" he asked. "As you say, the man cannot escape. A half-hour's delay will do no harm. We must plan the recovery of those papers. It will not be easy."

Baron Friedman turned once more to the girl, who was staring with a sort of amazed horror at young Mr. Harrington.

"I would advise you, madam," said he, "to go back to your state-room. Here comes the Countess. She will go with you. We shall have the papers in an hour, I think,

"'What is it?' he demanded once more. 'Has the girl missed her papers?'"

and you shall know the moment we have them."

The elderly woman with the green veil, who sat by the girl's side at table and on deck, came up to the group, and Baron Friedman spoke to her in a low tone. Then the four men bowed and went quickly aft to the smoke-room.

"Now," said young Harrington, settling down behind his corner table with a little sigh, "now, for Heaven's sake, explain! What is the nature of those papers? No, wait! Let me tell you Kärstelen's story." And he went quickly over the tale as he had had it from the Swiss lieutenant. There were little murmurs of anger or of amazement from the other two men, but Baron Friedman listened in silence, nodding his head from time to time, never stirring his eyes from those of the boy across the table. And when young Harrington had finished, he was

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silent for a short time, as if he were considering how he would best reply.

"You are a very rash young man," he said at last. "You must see that you have been a very rash young man, and you will see how rash when I tell you something of what you have done; but I believe you are well-meaning. I am certain of that. Such an enterprise as was offered you might tempt anyone whose experience had not been—had not been wide." He leaned forward across the little table, resting his arms upon it, and his eyes held those of the younger man with a force almost hypnotic.

"I am forced to allow you," he said, "a share in a certain State secret of very grave importance. In the first place, I may as well tell you that my name is not Baron Friedman; it is Colonel von Altdorf, and I am in the service of the Austrian Emperor."

Young Harrington gave a low cry of amazement.

"Colonel von Altdorf?" said he, "Colonel von Altdorf? Why, I know all about you. I've heard of you by the hour from Denis Mallory and from Mrs. Mallory, who was the Princess Eleanor of Novodnia. Colonel von Altdorf!"

The other man's eye lighted a bit.

"I am glad that you are a friend of Denis Mallory," said he. "It makes you a friend of mine. We must talk of him later. He is a great man. Now to our business! The lady with whom you have talked on deck and at dinner is the Princess Beatrice Amélie, the Archduchess Victoria's only child and the Emperor's niece."

"Oh, my God!" said young Harrington softly, and stared with wide eyes at the other man. The awfulness of the thing he had done began in a vague, dim fashion to reach his mind—sent a wave of inward sickness over him.

"She is bearing," continued Colonel von Altdorf steadily, "documents — personal letters from the Emperor, State despatches, outlines of policy, matters of the utmost import and secrecy, to the Archduke Johann, who is not dead, as people have supposed without proof, but living *incognito* in your city of Baltimore. You have read, before leaving Paris, what the journals said of the Emperor's weakness of health and of the quarrel with Franz Ferdinand? Yes? Very good. The Princess is relied upon to bring the Archduke home to Austria. No one living save herself or the Emperor could succeed. That is why she goes, and the reason for her going secretly is that the documents which you helped to steal must not be lost. We knew that there was danger, for the Bohemian party would do anything in the world—commit any crime—rather than allow those papers to reach Johann. Also they would commit any crime to learn what the papers contain. We thought we were safe on this ship. We thought we had eluded the pursuit which we knew was afoot. That is why we were not more careful about the papers. I shall never forgive myself. The man who calls himself Kärstelen is, I think, a Bohemian named Szakvary. He is almost the only one of their agents whose face I do not know. Well, he has the papers; but we must have them back, or Szakvary must not leave the ship alive."

Colonel von Altdorf's face flushed a little and he brought the palm of his hand sharply down upon the table.

"I tell you," he cried, in a low, tense voice, "rather than allow those documents to go ashore and at large in Szakvary's or anyone's hands but ours, I will burn this ship with everyone on board; or I will kill that Bohemian with my hands, if by so doing I can regain the Emperor's papers."

He was very terribly in earnest, and no one, however light-minded, would have dreamed of doubting his word. Colonel von Altdorf was not the sort of man to be doubted.

Young Harrington sat back in his chair and pressed a shaking hand over his eyes. It felt cold and damp, and his forehead also was damp with perspiration.

The inward sickness swept over him in waves like an attack of nausea as the full realisation of what he had done pressed deeper and deeper and more unrelentingly into his brain.

"I—can't make it seem—real!" he said, in a dull tone. "It *can't* be real! Good Heavens! such things don't happen nowadays on an ordinary, prosaic Atlantic liner. It's a —a play—a melodrama. It's some awful dream that's got hold on me. I'll wake up presently, and everything will be all right. I tell you, it *can't* be true! It *can't!*" His voice shook and ran up into a queer, high falsetto.

Colonel von Altdorf spoke quietly over his shoulder to a passing steward, and the steward set a glass of brandy upon the table and moved away again. Young Harrington gulped the spirit at a swallow and sat up shivering.

"Come!" he said fiercely. "Come!

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For God's sake what are we sitting here for? Every minute we wait, that blackguard is reading another page of those papers. Come!" But Colonel von Altdorf put out a hand upon the boy's arm and looked into his eyes.

"We shall go to the man's room," he said gently, "and you will enter alone, because he will not be suspicious of you. It may be that you can take the papers from him, single-handed; if not, we shall be outside the door ready to help." He paused a moment, watching the other's face.

"Remember," he said. "Your failure may mean a repainting of the map of Europe when the Emperor dies." He seemed to see something in the boy's face to please him, for he drew a little sigh that might have been satisfaction, and nodded his grey head.

Down below in the narrow corridor between outer and inner state-rooms, the three men of Princess Beatrice Amélie's suite halted, and young Harrington alone rapped upon the closed door of room No. 102. There was a slight crease between young Harrington's brows, and a certain extra squareness about his jaw which foreboded no particular good to Lieutenant Kärstelen of the Swiss Service, alias Szakvary, Bohemian spy.

"Who is there?" came a voice from inside the room—a low voice, not too steady. "You cannot come in. I am dressing."

"Open the door at once!" said young Harrington, his lips to the crack. "It is I, and there is danger. Open at once!"

The door swung open upon Lieutenant Kärstelen, coatless and pale, but very bright of eyes.

"What is it? What is it?" he whispered sharply. "Have they missed the papers? What have you heard?" He pulled the young man into the little room and bolted the door behind him.

"What is it?" he demanded once more. "Has the girl missed her papers? Jove! what a close call that was!"

"Yes, she has!" said young Harrington irritably. "At least, she's tearing about the ship in hysterics or something like. Why the deuce didn't you tell me it was she who had the papers? Who is she, anyhow?"

"Who is she?" cried the other man, and turned upon him amazedly. "Why, she's Bea—oh! she's a—she's a German girl, a—an agent, you know. They thought the things would be safer with her than with a man, I expect."

"Well," said young Harrington, "let's have a look at the papers. I want to be sure that they have nothing to do with money, you know; then I'll go up on deck and see what is being done."

But the other man had turned partly away again.

"Oh! my word is good enough, without seeing them, isn't it?" he said lightly.

"I'd rather be quite certain," said young Harrington. "I owe it to my conscience, as you might say," he explained.

The other faced him again, his brows a bit drawn.

"You can't see them," said he. "I have not even had a chance to look at them yet, myself. That cursed steward was here in the room when I returned. He went out just before you came in."

Young Harrington set his back against the door and smiled. There are many sorts of smiles.

"Can't see them?" said he gently. "Oh, yes, I'd best see them, I think. You promised, you know."

"You can't see them," repeated the other man doggedly. "It's enough to know that they're safe, isn't it? They can do no harm now. I tell you," he cried, and his voice shook a little, nervously, so that Harrington saw under what a strain the man had been, "I tell you, it is all right! Anyhow, you can't see them, and that is all there is of it. They are put away."

"Best give them to me—Szakvary," said young Harrington, smiling again. The Bohemian dropped back against the closed wash-hand-stand with a queer, choking noise in the throat, and for an instant his hands shook beside him. Then he drew a long breath and was quite himself again.

"Ah!" said he, regarding the young man before him with a certain new interest. "Ah! so you are in the game, too, my friend. You have played very stupidly. You lose."

"Oh, no," said young Harrington cheerfully. "Dear me, no! I win. Give me the papers, Szakvary, or I'll ill-treat you dreadfully. I'm such a lot bigger than you are! Give 'em up. You will never land with them, you know."

The Bohemian had moved gradually—so gradually that his movement was imperceptible—across the tiny room till he was close against the edge of the lower bunk. Then the hand which was behind him made a sudden swift dive towards the pillow there, and he was holding a small and neat American revolver so that young Harrington could

look accurately down its rifled barrel. Young Harrington laughed.

"Oh, bless you!" said he, "I'm not the least bit afraid of that. D'you think I'd be afraid of your firing that thing? Why, you'd have about five hundred people here in thirty seconds! Put it down."

The pistol's muzzle wavered and dropped. The man holding it appeared to give some consideration to what young Harrington had said. After a moment he slid it into one of his hip pockets, but from the same pocket he drew a very large clasp knife, and before the other man had clearly seen it, opened the blade. The younger man laughed again.

"Anything else?" he inquired humorously. "Bring 'em all out! Let's have a look at the whole arsenal." Then, all at once, he ceased laughing and drew back a step, for he had caught the gleam of the Bohemian's eye and saw that the man meant murder. It came to him with a sort of shock, for he had supposed that Szakvary's bellicose preparations were the purest bluff, and that the man would not dare to kill or wound him.

"Harrington drew out a thick packet of documents bound together with tape."

Once, a number of years before, he had had almostly exactly the same shock, with its accompanying sense of amazed injury, of outrage. It was in a football game, and the man playing opposite him had tried to put him out of the game by hitting him on the point of the jaw with his fist, as the two lines crouched down for the play to begin.

He was inexperienced in those days, and though he had heard of foul play, had never actually seen so flagrant a case of it.

Now, as at that other time, the thing roused murder in him. He bent a little forward, as the other man moved towards him, and waited, swinging from side to side. It was unfortunate for the Bohemian that he knew little of wrestling. He had no chance. He saw and felt nothing but a sudden whirlwind of small dimensions; and when the whirlwind had passed by, he lay, half on the floor, half against the red plush seat under the porthole, with the life nearly crushed from his bruised body; and young Harrington's strong hands were twitching at his throat.

"You'd stab me, would you?" said young Harrington. "You blackguard! You'd stab me, after I helped you to do your contemptible work!"

He held the man's throat with one hand and slipped the other inside the loosened waistcoat. The Bohemian struggled feebly, but young Harrington drew out a thick packet of documents bound together with tape. The tape was fastened in many places with great waxen seals, and these seals had not yet been broken.

"Not broken, by Jove!" he cried, with a little, high-pitched laugh of relief. "Not broken!" He stuffed the papers into a pocket of his jacket and arose to his feet, backing away towards the middle of the room.

The Bohemian spy, lying helpless against the edge of the red plush seat, turned slowly about and laid his arms out over the seat and dropped his head upon them, and his shoulders heaved and twisted with sobs.

"Oh, I say!" cried young Harrington gently. He had almost never before seen a man weep, and it distressed him curiously,

even though this same man had been quite ready, not long before, to kill him where he stood.

"Oh, I say!" he cried again awkwardly. "Don't--don't do that, you know! I—well, it's hard luck and all, but—somebody's got to lose. Don't do—that! You—you see, you were on the wrong side. You *had* to lose. It wouldn't do for you to win. It would have meant," said he, with a diplomatic air, "the repainting of the map of Europe—I have it on excellent authority. Don't be—don't be cut up over it. Better luck next time! And—and a better cause, you know. Eh, what?"

But the spy turned, still kneeling upon the floor beside the red plush seat, and faced him. He seemed not at all ashamed of his tears nor of the marks of grief upon his face.

"You!" he said, in a low, choked voice. "You prate to me of causes and rights and wrongs! You, who came into all this through a boy's silly vanity and love of excitement. You, who were willing to be made a thief because a man told you a romantic fairy tale! How dare *you* talk of rights and wrongs? Better luck next time! I tell you there will be no next time! It was win or die for me this time. I was to be shot against a wall two weeks ago, but they gave me this chance to win back my life and gain independence for Bohemia. I tell you I should have been remembered for a century! They would have called me the saviour of Bohemia. Now—better luck next time! Ah, go, go! Do not stand there gloating. Will you not go?" He turned about once more and dropped his face upon his outstretched arms. Young Harrington tiptoed softly from the room and closed the door behind him.

Once out in the passage, he paused a moment.

"Wonder if I'd best leave him there with that pistol?" he said to himself, and half turned to go back. But he could not bring himself again to enter the state-room where that man knelt weeping.

A little way down the corridor he found the other three and nodded at them joyously.

"Where's the Princess?" he demanded. "I want the Princess. This melodrama has got to have a star finish, or the curtain doesn't go down at all."

They found the Princess up above in the companionway. The elderly Countess was with her. She started towards them with a little, anxious, beseeching cry which ended in a sob of relief at Colonel von Altdorf's nod.

Young Mr. Harrington drew the fastened and sealed bundle of papers from his pocket and held them out.

"Here is your property, madam," said he. "It appears to be of some value. I shouldn't leave it about, if I were you. It only tempts foolish young men to melodrama." He shook his head at her humorously and folded his arms behind him with a little sigh, as if he were glad to have his hands free once more.

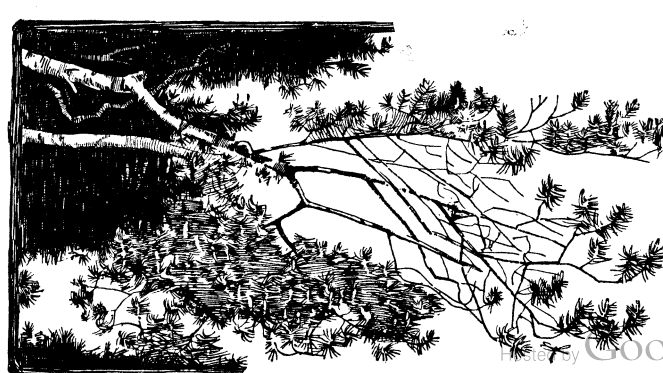
"These affairs of State!" he complained. "They're too jolly serious for me. I was never cut out for them, I expect. I expect football is more in my line. Eh, what? Yes, I expect I'd best stick to football."

Then, just as he had finished speaking, and before the Princess Beatrice could reply, there came from below, muffled and deadened by distance, but quite distinct, the sound of a revolver shot.

"What was that?" asked the Princess quickly. "What was that? It sounded like a shot."

Young Harrington's eyes met those of Colonel von Altdorf and lingered.

"That?" said he gently. "That was only the curtain signal, Princess. It marks the end of the play."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THE SYMPATHY THAT FAILED.

HOST: That stupid Baxter has spilled some coffee on Mrs. Richpin's frock.
HOSTESS: Oh, I *do* hope it's not spoilt!
HOST: She says it's only an old one.
HOSTESS: An old one! What impertinence! to wear an old dress at *my* "at home"!

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

A MEDITATION.

I'M just seventeen, and I shall put
My hair up in a while;
The bother is, I simply can't
Decide upon my "style";
For all girls have one nowadays,
Although their brothers smile.

Of course, if you are tall and slim—
With golden hair a-curl—
You wear your frocks in billows,
With flounces all awhirl:
You move with a fastidious air—
A Penrhyn Stanlaws Girl!

And then, you know, I'd have to be
Quite seven feet, I'm afraid;
With forehead low, eyes closely set—
"She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed"—
Before I could lay claim to be
A Greiffenhagen maid.

Then, if my hair were straight and black,
My eyes deep, dark, and misty,
With eyebrows straight and clearly marked,
And mouth made to be kist, I
Would dress in tailor-mades, and be
A Howard Chandler Christy.

And then, of all these modern types,
The one that's oftenest seen
Peeps down at you from calendars,
Her downcast lids between:
The summit of my longing is
To be a Gibson queen.

But since I'm not a Gibson girl,
And never, never can
Attain such heights of blessedness,
I've got a lovely plan:
When I'm a little older,
I shall wed a Gibson Man.

H. S. SINCLAIR.

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FARMER: How do I git out of this hotel in case o' fire?

NIGHT-PORTER: Jump out of the window an' turn to the right.

SHE: I don't think father likes to see you around so much.

HE: I'm sure of it. To-day he paid me that five pounds he borrowed over a year ago.

JACK AND JILL—

"SHE carries her age well, doesn't she?"

"Yes. She doesn't feel a day older than she says she looks."

"I DON'T believe that poets are born."

"Why not?"

"I never saw a long-haired baby."

To travel for pleasure is all well enough,
If you have both the wish and the wealth;
But when you have neither, it comes pretty tough
To travel about for your health.

CHEAPER.

JONES: I want you to see my new card-table.

SMITH: All right. Give me the address of the place you got it from.

JONES: What for?

SMITH: If they've got the same thing, it won't cost me so much to look at it there.

OLD LADY: Do people lose their lives here frequently, little boy?

LITTLE BOY: Not more than once.

HE: Pshaw! Men don't marry for money half as often as they are supposed to.

SHE: No, for not half the girls are rich that are supposed to be.

"Do you think that Wiggins is really your friend?"

"I suppose so; he's always giving me disagreeable advice."

"I want to be an angel,"
She sang, and then thereat
I mused if when she got her wings,
She'd wear them on her hat.

"POLITICS are a dirty puddle!"

"Ah! what was your opponent's majority?"

JUST about the time a man begins to feel that he is of considerable importance he meets some acquaintance who has forgotten his name.

WENT UP THE HILL,—

BELLA: Is your friend a marrying man?

STELLA: I intend that he shall be; but he doesn't know it yet.

MOTHER: How is my Johnny getting on at school?

TEACHER: He is rather backward in his studies, but then he is very forward in his manners.

When I sit down at set of sun
To count the things that I have done,
I'm glad it is nobody's biz
How very small the number is.

MRS. FIDGET: Now, Tommy, I want you to be as quiet as a mouse. I'm busy.

TOMMY (scornfully): Huh! If I was a mouse, you'd jump up on a chair and yell!

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TO FETCH—

JACK FELL DOWN AND BROKE HIS CROWN,—

A PAIL—

AND JILL CAME TUMBLING—

OF WATER.

AFTER.

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A MATTER OF CASTE.

MISS PANHARD: There's Miss Runabout nodding to you. Do you know her?

MISS MERCEDES: I don't really know her. Her car is only 5 H.P.; I merely bow.

"So when you got married, you ran away?"

"Yes."

"Well, what then?"

"Oh, well, then—we—er—walked back."

"Man wants but little here below,"
And is not hard to please;
But every woman that I know
Wants everything she sees.

THAT WICKED SMART SET, AGAIN!

MRS. DE VERE (to the Major, who is telling a short story): Er—yes, Major, but don't you think you ought to tell this story in a little lower tone of voice? It seems a little *risqué*, and the young lady on the other side might overhear you.

THE MAJOR: But, my dear madam, she has just told the yarn to me.

A woman never dares to write
As funny as she can,
For fear the public will suspect
She's some old, horrid man.

THE CONSIDERATE BOY.

SAID a small boy to his father: "Dad, what makes you look so angry?"

"I look angry because I am vexed at hearing your mother scold you so much for your badness."

"Well, dad, you should do as I do. I hear ma scolding you for your badness forty times a day, but I never remind you of it, for I always think you have been punished enough already."

HIS WAY.

A frog sat on a lily-pad—
It was a way he had.

A slim and stylish dragon-fly,
Alighting on a leaf close by,
Addressed him airily:

"My green young friend, wake up," said he.
"Your method's foolish, can't you see?
You ought to hurry round, like me—
Not sprawl there idly all the day,
Waiting for things to come your way.
Move on, I say."

The frog moved on. His mouth stretched wide;
It closed again. Alas, for pride!
Where was the fly? Inside.

And then he smiled so dreamily—
"My way," said he.

UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES!

"THREEPENCE fo' the 'ire of the chairs, please."

"Threepence! I thought they were a penny."

"That's right, sir—a penny each."

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"MANY HAPPY RETURNS OF THE DAY!" BY MAUDE GOODMAN

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"GOLDEN THREADS." BY MAUDE GOODMAN.

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THE PICTURES OF MAUDE GOODMAN.

BY AUSTIN CHESTER.

IT was in the early 'eighties of the last century that a movement, new to England, although familiar to students of the Old Masters in the works of Velasquez and also to students of Modern French Art in that of Édouard Manet, began slowly to make its way into the consciousness of the people under the name "Impressionism."

That movement might be roughly defined as the transposition of values to a lower key, in order to avoid competition with that of Nature's own pitch—a transposition which subordinates general detail in favour of an effect of light.

When arguments for and against this method were agitating the tempers and brains of those who were interested in such subjects — when James McNeil Whistler, Wilson Steer, Fred Brown, Moffatt Lindner, Edward Stott, Stanhope Forbes, Frank Bramley, Maurice Greiffenhagen, and many others had banded themselves together to form the New English Art Club and blow the clarion, Unconventionality, to attract and introduce themselves to a then unobservant public, there was marching forward to popular success, entirely uninfluenced by the so-called new movement, Miss Maude Goodman (Mrs. Arthur Scanes). Needing neither discussion nor exploitation to call attention to her ability, Miss Goodman gained rapidly for herself, as the exponent

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of sentiment, a position in the very heart of the people, the niche of Domestic Idealism being the one her work adequately fills.

The pictures of few modern artists, and certainly those of no woman artist, are more popular; nor is there any artist whose career can show so extraordinary a record of unbattled-for popularity. To paraphrase the well-known quotation: "She came, she was seen, she conquered"; and that there must have been a great want felt, even if the feeling were unconscious, by the public, for the pictures which she supplies, is demonstrated by the avidity with which not only the pictures themselves, but the truly admirable reproductions of them, have been bought.

Spread over the area of the whole civilised world these may be met with. In the length and breadth of the United Kingdom there is scarcely to be found a home of any pretension to culture that has not several hung on its walls. If the billiard- and smoking-rooms absorb the presentments of the art of S. E. Waller, in the boudoirs and drawing-rooms are as certainly to be found those of Miss Goodman. The interviewer extracts from her—extracts, the process is one of extraction, as she is diffident of recording stories which redound to her own fame — how far afield recognition of her talent has travelled; how, in the house of a native at Sierra Leone, copies of her pictures hang on the walls; how familiar to all Anglo-Indians is her work; and how in New York, as a bribe to the purchase of comestibles, a print of her "Un Chant d'Amour" was offered as a bonus; how, too, "Un Chant d'Amour" was one of the subjects chosen by the Princess Louise to be produced at the Tableaux Vivants at Windsor Castle before Queen Victoria; and how to engravings of "When the Heart is Young" and "——And Lived Happily Ever After," one of our Princesses gives, in her private sitting-room, places of honour.

"WANT TO SEE THE WHEELS GO WOUND." BY MAUDE GOODMAN.

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Miss Goodman's power of telling a story by the delineation of posture and action is, in its way, unique. She has done for children that which Marcus Stone and S. E. Waller

"SUSPENSE." BY MAUDE GOODMAN.

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have each done for men and women — brought together fairyland and prosaic life, welding the two with a brush.

Her art, however, differs from that of the men with whom in period and arrangement it suggests comparison. No two artists employ exactly the same method of painting. They may use the same palette —that is to say, they may each set their palette with identical colours and have the same aim in view; for "all art aims," says J. A. Symonds, "at presenting embodiment of thought and feeling with a view to intellectual enjoyment"; but the one artist will use involved and complicated, and the other simple, means by which they will each individually endeavour to attain the same end.

Born at Manchester, Miss Goodman was left motherless when a few days old, her father, after a time, marrying a second wife, a lady to whom Miss Goodman acknowledges owing a deep debt of gratitude, for it was she who, recognising her stepdaughter's exceptional bias towards art, encouraged the child to devote herself seriously to its study, and combated, later on, on her behalf, her father's prejudice against her adopting it as a profession. For Mr. Goodman had the usual dislike of a parent to his daughter's pursuing an independent career. Seeing her always pencil or brush in hand, he came, however, at last, to realise how much in earnest she was in her desire to study, and, putting his disapproval aside, engaged for her a master. But London was the Mecca of her hopes, and she wished to enter, as a student, the Royal Academy Schools. This, however, Mr. Goodman would not permit;

"MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY." BY MAUDE GOODMAN.

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"'GI'N A BODY KISS A BODY." BY MAUDE GOODMAN.

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neither, when she shifted the scene of her aspirations and advanced the idea of going to Paris, to work in one of the several studios there, would he give to this project his consent; although eventually he acceded to her entering herself as a pupil at South Kensington, where, watching her rapid progress, with the keenest interest and pride, he was the first to acknowledge the justification of her ambitions.

The difference in technique between an artist trained in the French school and one trained in the English is shown at a glance, and there is a wide field of conjecture open to the speculative mind as to what manner of work Miss Goodman would have produced had she learned to paint under the guidance of Julien, and had been, in due course, influenced by Bastien Le Page, Tony Fleury, and Carolus Duran, instead of taking her rudimentary instruction under the direction of Sir Edward Poynter in the atmosphere of the South Kensington Schools. Perhaps, as she is in agreement with the opinion, which is attributed to Velasquez, that "Nature herself is the artist's best teacher; industry the surest guide to perfection"; that "it is wisest to resolve neither to sketch nor to colour any object without having that object itself in front of one"—she, had she studied in Paris, would have remained unmoved from the attitude towards art which she has elected to assume, and through that best of all masters, experience, have continued to issue to her admiring public, work identical with that which forms the subject-matter of this article.

We are, especially our women, sentimentalists, and Miss Goodman's suggestion that Youth should dance through its years to sound of tabor or viol, or laze the hours, lulled

"UN CHANT D'AMOUR." BY MAUDE GOODMAN.

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by the melody of a love-song, attracts our imagination. It is to the portrayal of these graceful measures, perhaps, that Miss Goodman owes her great popularity—for one is justified in considering the popularity of an artist great for the purchase of whose work there is great competition; as was exemplified in the case of her picture, "Want to See the Wheels Go Wound," for which no less than fifteen offers to purchase were made.

She depicts a world with which few would quarrel. Her maids coquet with the harmless vanity of birds pluming themselves. Her men are spendthrifts only of their time. Her music is so enchanting that to it we, as it re-echoes in our hearts, lend a willing ear. Each picture contains a special plea for Tom Moore's statement that "'Tis Love, 'tis Love that makes the world go round," and if, like all special pleadings, it is neither quite honest nor quite convincing, it has, none the less, the power to influence us. Especially is this the case in her pictures of "Mother-Love," for most women possess a constancy which is infinitely pathetic. Deep down in their hearts lie glorified remembrances of their children's baby years, which they imagine they see reproduced in the idealised beings of Miss Maude Goodman's creation.

"HELPING MOTHER." BY MAUDE GOODMAN.

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She has not hit the public taste by a lucky shot, but by deliberate aim; and premeditation is the essential quality of all art. It is premeditative selection of environment that in her own home surrounds her with the period of the decoration recognisable in all her pictures. She has, of deliberation, chosen it as an appropriate setting, and as such setting cannot be come by without thought and calculation, we are justified even in calling the house in which she lives in Kensington a part of her art; but, in addition to this quality of premeditation which enables her, by having them always to her hand, to use the setting amongst

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which she lives — the graceful brocades and slender-legged tables and chairs of the Empire period — as backgrounds for her motives, Miss Goodman paints that which she feels and of which she is fully convinced. To her the white satin cherubs of her canvases are the real children whom the more prosaic students of young life see

This last idea, extravagant as it may appear, is not without justification; for when "When the Heart is Young" was being exhibited, Miss Goodman received a letter from a susceptible swain asking her for the name and address of the model from whom the girl at the piano had been painted, and adding, although probably

"A LABOUR OF LOVE." BY MAUDE GOODMAN.

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filching jam from the nursery cupboard and, when opportunity serves, playing with fire or water. Hers are the children of the Ballad, the children of the King, children who sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam; yet this Apotheosis of the Babe, "too flattering sweet to be substantial," points a lesson in perfection not without its use, and it has enough charm to decoy from the ranks of bachelors many an imaginative man.

not in these words, that the writer's "bent of love was honourable, his purpose marriage."

Hope is always hand-in-hand with her lovers; for when, the deeps of passion having been successfully skipped, we meet them again, willing prisoners in matrimony's bonds, they are in the first wonder of parentage.

This note of idealised marriage is sounded

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"WHEN THE HEART IS YOUNG." BY MAUDE GOODMAN.

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"LIKE THIS, GRANNIE." BY MAUDE GOODMAN.

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loudly in the picture "Santa Claus," issued as an engraving by Messrs. Slade Bros. and Lacy; and in "——And Lived Happily Ever After." Also in "A Labour of Love," in which a complaisant mother looks on whilst a father, stealing presumably an hour from the claims of the gay, social world to which his ruffles and cravat appear to attach him, instructs his little daughter in the first rudiments of zither playing.

Beauty, says Symonds, is the proper end of art; and if that side of it which Miss Goodman loves to depict fails to lend itself to strenuous emotion, it lends itself willingly enough to grace; and she has, largely developed, that which Thackeray called "an instinct for the picturesque."

It is probable that each proprietor of the different works of Miss Goodman who has reproduced them would claim for himself the justification of his own especial choice by saying that the prints of this or that picture have the largest sale. A talk with the representative of the Berlin Photographic Company, in New Bond Street, will leave you under the impression that no sales of the prints of any one special picture could possibly exceed that of "Hush!" which they are inclined, from the large results that have accrued to them, to consider as the most popular of all her works; one with Mr. Mendoza, who commissioned, from Miss Goodman, "Watching the Tournament," exhibited in his King Street Gallery, reveals that he issues of that picture many thousands of engravings annually; Messrs. Goupil say the same of "Through the Golden Grain" and "Entangled." Messrs. Faulkner and Co. re-echo the story with regard to "Love's Melodies," whilst the "Un Chant d'Amour" and "That's Rude, Doggie!" which are the property of

"THAT'S RUDE, DOGGIE!" BY MAUDE GOODMAN.

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"——AND LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER." BY MAUDE GOODMAN.

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"WATCHING THE TOURNAMENT." BY MAUDE GOODMAN.

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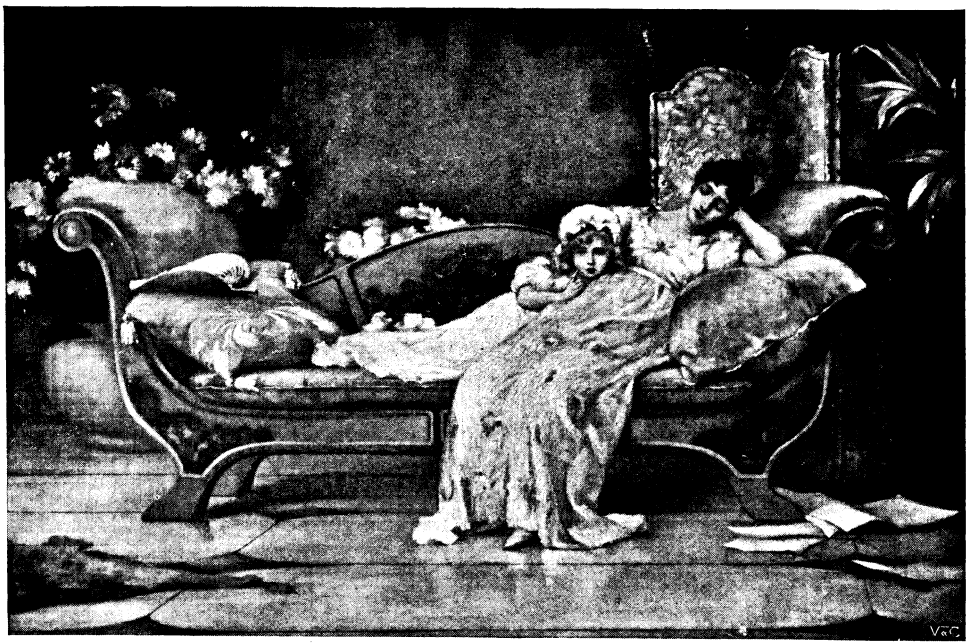

"HUSH!" BY MAUDE GOODMAN.

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"SANTA CLAUS." BY MAUDE GOODMAN.

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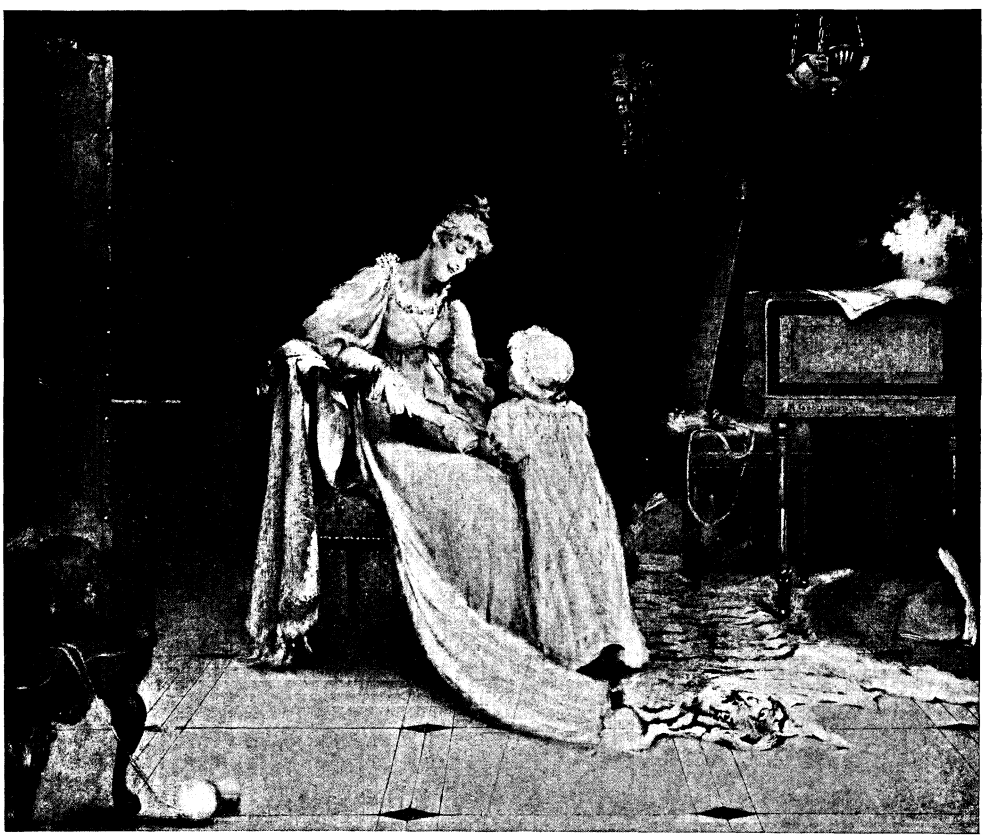
Mr. Leggatt, must, we conceive, be run close in popularity by the "——And Lived Happily Ever After," the "Want to See the Wheels Go Wound," and the "Me Loves 'oo," of Messrs. Hildesheimer, though they themselves once said that the sale of prints of "When the Heart is Young," which is also their property, has far exceeded that of any other.

Some memory of the words Shakespeare put into the mouth of *Florizel* seem to have been in Miss Goodman's mind when she painted this subject—

> When you do dance, I wish you
> A wave o' the sea, that you might do
> Nothing but that.

Certainly, on the minds of the many purchasers of the print of this picture, she must have impressed some such image of the poetry of motion of dancing waves.

Three of the subjects chosen for her canvases were suggested by actual occurrences. "That's Rude, Doggie!" owed its origin to a lesson in manners administered to a pug by her own child. It was exhibited in the Royal Academy of 1889. "Me Loves 'oo" hung on the line in the Institute of Oils, 1893, which gives a new reading of the fable of Narcissus, was a touch of vanity noted in the child of Lady Maitland, and caught and chronicled by Miss Goodman with extraordinary success; whilst in "Want to See the Wheels Go Wound," the scene depicted—a vestibule and staircase, similar to those to be found in many a well-to-do home—is one in which her own little son Leigh was caught inquisitively peeping into the open door of a grandfather's clock. This picture was exhibited in the Royal Academy of 1892.



"AND THEN THE FAIRIES WENT TO BED." BY MAUDE GOODMAN.

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The first success which Miss Goodman made can be definitely fixed as being in the year 1882—that of her marriage to Mr. Arthur Scanes—when the purchase of one of her pictures by Sir John Aird

"LOVE'S MELODIES." BY MAUDE GOODMAN.

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stamped her as a young painter whose career would be worth the watching.

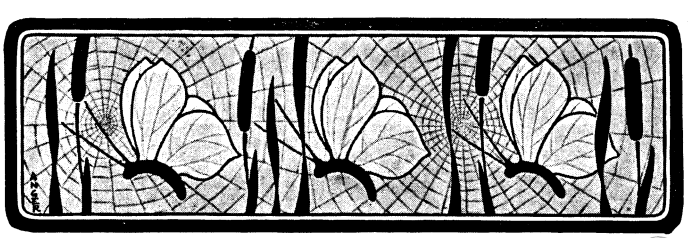
In 1883 she had on the walls of Burlington House no fewer than six pictures, of which "His Portrait" became probably the most popular. We English are, I repeat, a nation of sentimental optimists, and the very titles of Miss Goodman's pictures—which explain, in great measure, her attitude of graceful joy towards art—explain, at the same time, some measure for the reason of her works' popularity; and for this popularity she has paid the penalty in having been made the recipient of much good-natured persiflage, *Punch* starting it some twenty years ago with some kindly and humorous exaggerations, and Messrs. Hildesheimer issuing, only the other day, an amusing caricature of her "Taller than Mother." Children, dressed *à la* Maude Goodman, have been the "observed of all observers" at many a fancy-dress ball; and the "Maude Goodman style" is recognised, as a descriptive short cut, when critics wish to point to some one or other of the many imitators of her subjects. She has had one experience which would naturally make an indelible impression upon an artist, it being probably unique to receive money voluntarily added to the price agreed on for the purchase of a picture; but when the late Mr. T. Wallis, of the French Gallery, from whom her talent won early recognition, had successfully negotiated the sale of one of her works, the purchaser, upon its being sent home, wrote to him to state that the picture had given so much pleasure to himself and his wife that he begged to be allowed to add to the price he had already paid a sum which was equivalent to one fourth of the original amount.

It is inevitable, although art has no sex, that comparisons should suggest themselves between the work of Miss Goodman and that of other lady artists. Especially, through opposing reasons, between the work of Lady Stanley (Dorothy Tennant), who, her outlook on life being naturalistic, sees young England disporting itself at the tail-end of carts, swinging on rails, joyous and unkempt in the gutter; and also between the earlier works of Mrs. Adrian Stokes, whose depicted children knew little beyond the rags and sorrows of life, who, in the same Academy which saw one of Miss Goodman's many triumphs, exhibited that pathetic picture of a cottage-interior in which a child is sitting by the coffin of a dead brother, and to which, as title, Mrs. Stokes applied the well-known lines of Mrs. Hemans'—

> Oh! while my brother with me played,
> Would I had loved him more!

But art has many provinces, and not the least among them is that of fostering agreeable illusions; and who shall blame Miss Goodman if she idealises the love of the man for the maid; that of the bride for the bridegroom; or that which exists between mother and child?

"We are," says Victor Hugo, "flakes of eternal snow in eternal darkness," and we owe a debt of gratitude to a Maude Goodman who can bring into the solemn gloom of our lives, which so sadly need beauty and illusion, the light of happiness. The Marquise d'Alambert, a woman of exquisite intelligence, asserted that "nothing makes more for happiness than to have the mind persuaded and the heart touched." To Miss Goodman belongs the power to do both. Her work is pure idealism, but, as such, renders immense assistance in the struggle ever waging against the forces of barbarism; it is the *leit motif* that has pierced to penetrate the heart of many a liver of a dull suburban life with a note of beauty; and who shall gauge the helpfulness and power to influence of such a note? On her own ground she has no competitors, and can truthfully say, with Michael Angelo: "Myself am ever mine own counterfeit."



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THE SPECULATIONS OF JACK STEELE.

By ROBERT BARR.*

III.—A SWEET PROBLEM.

HERE now projects across these pages the sinister shadow of a man. He was one seldom seen except by his immediate business associates, and yet seldom has a newspaper been issued that did not contain his name. This was Peter Berrington, the greatest financial brain the world had hitherto produced—the modern embodiment of Mammon. In early life there had occurred to him the obvious proposition that if any one man could control the manufacture and sale of some simple article in universal use, he would secure a fortune greater than that of all the monarchs on earth put together. Peter Berrington chose soap as his medium, and the world-renowned trust called Amalgamated Soap had been the outcome. His methods were as simple as his products. He offered what he considered a fair price to a rival for his business,and if that rival refused, Peter crushed him by a competition the other could not withstand. Berrington seemed to act on one fixed rule in life, which was to avoid the law courts wherever possible; yet, nevertheless, he was haled to the bar on more than one occasion, but invariably he escaped unscathed, without a stain on his character, as if the soap he supplied to the universe had removed even the suspicion of dishonesty from himself. It pleases the world to buy soap under different titles, but it is all manufactured by the same company. Berrington's air-tight monopoly finally produced an annual income in excess of the fortune any man on earth possessed twenty-five years ago. With this ever-increasing income he bought banks, first in New York, then in each other great city, and finally in the larger towns. He purchased trust companies and insurance associations. He bought railways and steamship lines, also city councils and State legislators, judges, juries, and senators. He was now the guardian and manipulator of the people's savings, and his banks had the handling of all the money the United States Government possessed. Magazines printed vivid articles exhibiting the dark points of his career. Peter never entered a protest. Powerful newspapers hurled vigorous denunciations against him, but Peter never replied. The few who knew him in private life described him as a quiet, timorous man, apparently without opinions of his own, who was withal deeply religious. Yet all the histories printed of him never contained the record of any man who had defeated him.

It was but natural, then, that the Chicago papers should make much of Jack Steele's encounter with this giant of the financial world. Jack had met him on the battle-ground of the Chicago wheat-pit, and had routed him, horse, foot, and dragoons. Steele's exposure of the real wheat situation of the country had been so sudden that the barrels of money which Peter Berrington kept in readiness to buy the whole crop, when he had hammered the price low enough, remained unopened and unexpended.

Berrington would have made billions at one fell swoop had not this man Steele blindly, quite unwittingly, stumbled across his path and tripped him up. The newspapers exaggeratingly credited Steele with making many more millions than he had actually secured, and it was only when the anxious three days of panic had ended that Steele himself realised what a tremendous fortune had been within his grasp, if he had only had the money to manipulate the situation, or even if he had risked all he actually possessed. Indeed, Steele perceived when too late that he had blundered into the biggest deal ever projected upon this earth, and while he undoubtedly spoiled the game for its inaugurators, he did not himself profit nearly as much as might have been the case. He began to doubt his own judgment, and the uneasy thought came to him that if he had made terms that night with Nicholson in the office of the Press Alliance, he might have made from ten to twenty millions instead of three or four. Yet

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he was consoled by the belief that Peter would have been true to no bargain he might have made, and in the end would have robbed him of the agreed share. In spite of his religious reputation, Peter was accredited with no qualms of conscience in a business deal.

The newspapers re-recited Steele's brief besting of Rockervelt, which was now utterly eclipsed by his victory over Berrington, and they jocularly advised New York rustics to stay at home and not venture into a real city like Chicago. In face of all this ridicule, and in spite of accusations and denunciations levelled against him for his efforts to mislead a free and incorruptible Press, Peter Berrington made no sign, and New York silently swallowed up the mysterious Nicholson. A few wiseacres in Chicago shook their heads as they read the laudations of Mr. John Steele, saying the young man was not yet done with Peter Berrington; and later events proved the correctness of their surmise.

Steele himself was not particularly frightened at the outlook, but neither was he extremely pleased. He was sorry that Fate had brought him into opposition with Peter Berrington, but he had learned that fact too late to withdraw. When he met Nicholson, and learned for the first time that the Great Bear was Amalgamated Soap, he was already committed too deeply for half measures to aid him. He had acted at once, decisively and successfully, and would have been relieved had he merely got out even. It was his usual luck that he came away with large profits, and for that he thanked Fate, because he knew his enemy was ruthless. Success did not turn his head in the least. He was a cool thinker and detested all this newspaper notoriety. He knew fortunes were not made by the beating of drums, and he kept very quiet until the hubbub was over, refusing to see reporters or say anything about the matter, save to his most intimate friends. He hoped that some fresh sensation would speedily drive his name from the columns of the Press, and until that time came he sought shelter, doing nothing. He comforted himself with the thought that Peter Berrington, while merciless to an opponent, was merciless merely to acquire that opponent's business. He believed the great man to be entirely without sentiment, and therefore surmised he would not seek revenge when a deal was once completed and done with. Nevertheless, he resolved to keep his weather eye open, which was wise.

The new celebrity he had attained brought all sorts and conditions of men to his offices. He began to think that all the wild-cat schemes in the country were placed before him. Letters poured in from almost every part of the world, and he was offered gold-mines, patents, railways, steamship lines, industrial enterprises, and what not. He took larger offices and protected himself from intrusion. He became a much more difficult man to see than even the President of the United States —or perhaps it would be more fitting to say than Mr. Peter Berrington, for Peter allowed no outsider to penetrate to his den.

There was one man, however, who succeeded in reaching the inner room of Jack Steele, and his card bore the name of William Metcalfe. This card had been preceded, however, by some excellent letters of introduction, and so John Steele made an appointment with him. He was favourably impressed with the appearance of Mr. Metcalfe, who did not look like a city man, but rather a cross between a bluff farmer and a shrewd manufacturer—which, indeed, he turned out to be. After seating himself, William Metcalfe plunged directly into the heart of his business, without preliminary, which also pleased John Steele.

"I know your time is valuable," he said; "so is mine. I have undertaken an operation that proves too big for me, and I want you to help me carry it out."

"I have three rules, Mr. Metcalfe, which I rarely break. In the first place, I never finance anything. If, for instance, you wish to build a factory, or to exploit a patent, it is useless coming to me expecting help."

"I have no factory to build and no patent to exploit," said Metcalfe.

"My second rule is that the man with whom I go in, must be prepared to put up dollar for dollar with me in hard cash, and not in future prospects."

"I am prepared to do that," rejoined Metcalfe.

"My third rule is that I must see for myself and understand the business offered. I do not give a hang for the opinions of experts. If the proposal is complicated beyond my comprehension, I don't go in."

"Quite right," commended Metcalfe. "None of your three rules will be in the least infringed by me. Do you know anything of the beet-sugar business?"

"I do not."

"Did you ever hear of Bradley, of Bay City?"

"I did not."

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"Well, what Bradley accomplished may

"'Do you want to earn fifty cents?'"

be understood by a ten-year-old boy. He went over to Germany, and came back with some seeds in his handbag, which seeds he planted. From those seeds have grown the beetroot industry of Michigan. There are now factories in that State capitalised at ten millions of dollars. There are nearly a hundred thousand acres of Michigan land in beets. Ten years ago I hadn't a penny; to-day I think I could put as much money on the table as you, and all on account of those seeds Bradley brought from Germany. I own three big factories in Michigan, and four others in States further west. You hinted that you didn't wish to deal in possibilities; but, if you will forgive me for saying it, there is no industry in this country at the present moment which offers greater promise that the manufacture of sugar out of beetroot."

"I dare say," said Steele indifferently. "I am quite willing to applaud the excellent Bradley, who made millions of beets grow where none had grown before. I admire such a man exceedingly, even though unprepared to follow in his steps. You see, Mr. Metcalfe, I am not a useful citizen like yourself and Mr. Bradley. I simply make a raid at some project, filch what I can, and get back into my den. As I told you, I am

not building factories, not even those that squeeze the succulent beet. My motto is large profits and quick returns."

"I am here to offer you immense profits and immediate returns. I understand the sugar business down to the ground, and have realised its possibilities for several years past. Therefore I determined to combine all the big sugar factories at present existing in the United States. Rapidly as I myself have acquired wealth, the sugar business has been growing too quickly for me, and at the beginning of this year I saw I had to put my project into action, or else interest a body of financiers, which I did not wish to do, for my ambition is to control the sugar-beet industry of the United States, and ultimately of the world."

"Ah, you hope to become a sort of sweetened Peter Berrington," said Steele, with a smile, and he thought of this remark somewhat grimly later on.

"Exactly," said Metcalfe seriously, without duplicating the other's smile. "As I told you, I own outright seven factories. I secured options on all the rest, and in each case have paid down a forfeit, for I shall be compelled to buy outright within the next month if I am to hold them. Now, the total cost of all the factories in the States at present, built or building, comes to almost double the capital I possess. If you will put up dollar for dollar with me, we will purchase these factories outright. Then we will form the whole into a gigantic company. When this is done, you can withdraw your money, and probably as much more as you put in. If the public do not subscribe the full amount we demand, I will guarantee to relieve you at par of all the shares that may fall to your portion."

"How can you guarantee to do that when at the present moment you have not got more than half the necessary capital for forming the company?"

"I can guarantee it because I am certain

"'Precious greenbacks! Loot divine!
Twenty dollars, you are mine!'"

the public will subscribe; but even if they do not, the moment the company is formed there is a bank in this city willing to advance me cash to the amount of three-quarters of our capital. Therefore I can guarantee that you will double your money within a month—that is, within a month of your putting it in. You say you care nothing for the opinions of experts; neither do I, therefore I propose that you become my guest for two weeks, and visit most of the factories now under my

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control. You can see the books and balance-sheets of my own concerns, and from what you learn under my tuition you will be able to form a very good estimate of how the other factories are placed."

"I understand very little about company promoting," said Steele dubiously.

"I understood just as little a short time since, but it was necessary that I should learn, and I have learnt. Besides, I got letters of introduction to Farwell Brothers, the most substantial and honest firm connected with that business in Chicago. The same people introduced me to them that introduced me to you. Suppose, for instance, the combined factories were to cost us ten million dollars. With such prospects as there are ahead, we would be quite justified in forming a company for twenty millions. If the public subscribed only half of what we demanded, we would have our factories for nothing, and still control the combination."

"How about your working capital?"

"We don't need working capital. Every factory is making money."

"Well, candidly, Mr. Metcalfe, that project seems too easy and simple to be entirely feasible. There must be something lying in wait to wreck it."

"Nothing so far as I can see," said Metcalfe confidently.

"What if the public do not subscribe a penny?"

"Oh, I've looked out for that. When I got the options, there was, of course, no longer any need for keeping the affair secret, and I have already been promised subscriptions to the new company to the extent of one-third the proposed capital of twenty millions. That one-third will be subscribed in Michigan and Wisconsin alone, without touching the State of Illinois or the capitalists of Chicago."

"Very well, Mr. Metcalfe, you appear to have thought of everything. I'll accept your invitation, so long as it binds me to nothing, and will go wherever you lead me, beginning, let us say, with one of your own factories. I understand figures, and I shall want to see the books and make a somewhat thorough search into the income of at least the principal factories. You have no objection to that, I suppose?"

"No, not in the least. Big as our capitalisation will be, this is a thoroughly sound industrial proposition, and before five years are over I am certain that we will be justified in doubling our normal capital if we wish to do so, and paying a mighty good percentage on the same. Of course, I stand by the business. I suppose you wish to pull out as quickly as possible."

"Yes, that's the idea. I hope you have not offered extravagant prices for these factories?"

"That's just the point. I have not. You see, as I told you, I am thoroughly acquainted with the business. A capitalist from New York or Chicago might have been deluded, but they cannot delude a practical man like myself. Indeed, to convince you of the confidence that others show in the proposed company, I may tell you that the capital promised comes largely from the present owners of those factories, who appreciate the economies to be inaugurated by combination, and who in some instances are putting back into the new company the entire amount I shall pay them."

"Do they know you intend to capitalise for double what the property has cost?"

"Naturally not, Mr. Steele. Of course they understand I am not in this business entirely for my health; but apart from that, anyone conversant with the progress the beet industry has made during the last four or five years is well aware that the developments of the next five or six will be something enormous."

"All right, Mr. Metcalfe. I'm ready to go with you to-morrow, if that is not too soon for you."

John Steele's visits to the beet-sugar district more than corroborated all that Mr. Metcalfe had told him. Quietly he studied his host and guide during the excursion, and the more he saw of him the better he liked him. If there was an honest man in the country, that man appeared to be William Metcalfe, in spite of his determination to capitalise the properties for double what he paid for them. John's own conscience was not supersensitive on this point, and his private opinion would have been that a man was a fool not to take all he could get. So, before they returned to Chicago, he had quite made up his mind to become a partner with William Metcalfe in forming the Consolidated Beet Sugar Company. Metcalfe having no domicile in Chicago, the headquarters of the new trust was the private office of John Steele and the apartments adjoining. These adjoining apartments were occupied by Mr. William Metcalfe, upon whose shoulders naturally fell the bulk of the work. It was he who saw the lawyers to whom he had been introduced; who negotiated with the bank and made such

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outside arrangements as were necessary in the launching of so gigantic a scheme. Steele was more and more impressed with the business capacity of his new partner as the days went on, and he congratulated himself on being in conjunction with so capable a man. Notwithstanding his increasing confidence, he never for a moment relaxed his vigilance, nor was anything done without his sanction and approval, and he allowed no obscure point to pass without thoroughly mastering it. Towards the conclusion of preliminary arrangements, he saw with some apprehension that this project would involve every penny of capital he possessed, and this, of course, was cause for anxiety, though not for alarm, because all the omens were favourable. Yet his vigilance might have been of little avail had not Chance played into his hands. Steele was constantly in the office; Metcalfe was frequently called elsewhere, and in one of his absences a telegraph-boy brought in a message.

"Any answer?" asked the lad.

Steele tore open the envelope and gazed at the telegram for a moment, uncomprehending. It was in cipher. Then he looked at the envelope and saw it was addressed to his partner.

"No answer," said Steele to the boy; "but look here, my lad, do you want to earn fifty cents?"

"Sure," replied the messenger.

"Very well, get me another envelope from the nearest telegraph-office. I see this is for my partner, not for me."

He threw half-a-dollar on the table, which the boy grasped and left.

"Be as quick as you can," cried Steele, before he reached the door.

The cipher telegram was a long one, but speedily Steele wrote it out on a sheet of paper. When the boy returned with the envelope, Steele placed the telegram within it, sealed it, and addressed it in imitation of the telegraphic clerk. Then he walked into the adjoining office and placed the resealed telegram on Mr. Metcalfe's desk.

"Now, why does honest William Metcalfe receive a long telegram in cipher from New York," said Steele to himself, knitting his brows. "He has never even mentioned New York to me, yet he is in secret communication with someone there. Lord! one can never tell when the biggest sort of crank will not suddenly loom up as the most useful man in the world!" cried Steele, as he suddenly bethought himself of Billy Brooks, a jocular person who bored all Chicago with his knowledge of cipher, claiming there was nothing he couldn't unravel except the Knock Alphabet cipher of the Russian Nihilists. And Billy had his office in the fifteenth storey of the adjoining block. Steele shoved the copy of the telegram in his trousers pocket, put on his silk hat, went down one elevator, and up another, in almost less time than it takes to tell about it.

"Say, Billy, I've got a cipher here that you can't decode, and I've got twenty dollars to bet on it."

"Let's see your cipher," cried Billy, his eyes sparkling, "All ciphers fall into seven distinct classes. These classes are then subdivided into——"

"Yes, I know, I know!" cried Steele impatiently. "Here's the message.'

Billy glanced at it.

"Hand over your twenty dollars, Steele."

"What! you haven't solved it already?"

"No, but I see at a glance it falls into division three and into sub-division nineteen. I'll decode it within an hour. Shall I bring it over to your office?"

"No, Billy, I'll sit right down here, even if you are six hours at it. I herewith place two ten-dollar bills on your desk, and if this proves important, which it may or may not, I'll multiply those bills by ten; and for that number of days, at least, I shall require the utmost secrecy."

"All right, John, sit down and keep quiet, and there's the latest evening paper."

There was silence in the room as Billy opened a bookcase and took down one bulky tome, two medium-sized books, and a number of smaller volumes that looked like dictionaries. Turning to his desk, he wrote the message in a variety of different ways, on as many sheets of paper. For nearly three-quarters of an hour no sound was heard but the scratching of a pen now and then, and the rustle of leaves. Then the stillness was broken by a war-whoop.

"Here you are, Jack, my boy; and I'll take my Bible oath on its accuracy. Couldn't be such a series of coincidences as to run so smoothly otherwise.

"Precious greenbacks! Loot divine!
Twenty dollars, you are mine!"

Billy jubilantly grasped the currency and shoved it into his pocket, handing the sheet of paper to Steele, who read—

"I shall occupy room one hundred and fifty at the Grand Pacific Hotel on Thursday, the twenty-seventh, at eleven a.m. Do not ask for me at the office, nor take the elevator,

but come up the stair, and rap twice. Wait two minutes, and rap a third time. Bring all documents with you."

There was no signature.

"Billy," said Steele rather seriously, "we will now burn all your figuring, if you don't

"Nicholson appeared."

mind, and then I wish you to obliterate this from your memory. I cannot tell until after Thursday whether it is important or not. I think, however, if you keep mum, this will be worth an extra two hundred dollars to you."

"You can depend on me, Jack. We're not all making money as fast as you are. Of course, I know that financial ciphers are usually important. Here's the *débris*; burn it on the oilcloth, near the register."

Steele's investigation of the Grand Pacific Hotel floor occupied by room one hundred and fifty showed him that this apartment was well chosen, for neither of the rooms on either side had a communicating door. However, he engaged room one hundred and forty-nine, on the opposite side of the hall, and before ten o'clock on the twenty-seventh he took up his position inside that apartment. When eleven o'clock approached, he locked his door, shoved the table against it, stood thereon, and looked through the transom into the hall. He darkened his own window so that he could not be observed by anyone glancing up outside. He heard the first knock, then cautiously peered down and recognised William Metcalfe standing there, facing the opposite door, with a bundle under his arm. After the third knock, Metcalfe entered, but opened the door so slightly that Steele could see nothing within, nor did he hear any greeting voice. A full hour passed with not a sound from the closed room, then Metcalfe came out again, with the bundle still under his arm, and walked quietly away, leaving his partner on watch at the transom. Time goes slowly for a man on tip-toe with eyes strained, but at last his patience was rewarded. The door opposite opened, and the head of Nicholson appeared. He glanced quickly up and down the hall, and as the way was apparently clear, stepped out and vanished. John Steele came down from the table, drew aside the curtains, and let the light into the darkened room. He poured a glass of water from the carafe into a tumbler, swallowed the liquid at a gulp, then sank into the armchair beside the bed. He gave utterance to an uneasy laugh, then muttered a sentence which might be called unexpected—

"Billy Brooks, my boy, you'll get your two hundred dollars!"

Drawing a deep breath, he then concentrated his mind on the crisis with which he was confronted. Metcalfe was undoubtedly the owner of the sugar factories, and was, as he had said, a well-known business man in

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Michigan; but, nevertheless, here was undoubted proof that he was a minion of Amalgamated Soap, a mere pawn in the hands of Peter Berrington and his strong colleague, Nicholson. Every penny John Steele possessed was sunk in Consolidated Sugar, and that these men meant to ruin him he had not the slightest doubt. The question was: How could they do it? Even if Metcalfe's books had been false, even if a hundred per cent. too much had been paid for the factories, there would still be something left for him out of the wreck. Yet from the moment he saw the face of Nicholson at that door, he knew Amalgamated Soap had determined to strip him of every *sou* he possessed. The first obvious suggestion that occurred to him was that here was the occasion for consulting a first-class lawyer; yet what could a lawyer do for him? He had no money to fight. The more he thought of the situation, the worse it appeared. No doubt Farwell Brothers were *employés* of Amalgamated Soap. No doubt the bank in which their funds were deposited belonged to the same all-embracing combination. There were a hundred perfectly legal methods by which the amount lodged there could be tied up, while, if he appealed to the law, the expense would be tremendous, and he might be dragged from court to court; new trial could follow new trial, and appeal tread on the heels of appeal until his millions had vanished into thin air. He was as entirely in the hands of Amalgamated Soap as if he had been tied in a bundle and presented to that celebrated company. Terror was imported into the situation by his uncertainty as to what method these financial buccaneers would adopt. Yet at that distressful moment his mind wandered to the comic opera of the "Mikado," and a smile came to his lips. Would it be long and lingering, with boiling oil at the end of it, or would it be the short, sharp shock of the executioner's stroke? His resentment turned more against the apparently honest Metcalfe than towards even Nicholson or Peter Berrington. He would have liked to throttle that man, but he knew that, whatever the outcome, he must retain his grip on himself and present an impassive exterior to his colleague and the world.

Next morning, John Steele met his partner as usual with a smile on his face.

"Well, Metcalfe, how's things going?"

"Oh, everything's coming our way," said Metcalfe. "This thing will be done so easy you will wonder you ever doubted its success."

"Well, I hope so, I hope so," replied Steele, the possible double meaning of his partner's phrase striking him like a blow in the face; but the smile never wavered.

The company had already been technically formed—that is to say, a number of clerks in Steele's office, together with the brothers Farwell, had constituted themselves the Consolidated Beet Sugar Company, with various powers duly set forth, organised under the laws of the State of New Jersey; and when officers were selected, the beet sugar factories were bought by this company at just double the price Steele and Metcalfe had paid for them. Then the officials resigned in a body, when cheques had been passed and everything done with beautiful legality, while Steele and Metcalfe and their nominees took their places at the board. It was arranged that there should be seven directors. Steele was to nominate two, and Metcalfe was to nominate two, while they were to agree mutually on the chairman. Metcalfe had proposed that the elder Farwell should be chairman, and he nominated the younger as his colleague on the board. Farwell, who knew every intricacy of company law, was accepted by Steele, and there was still one nomination open to Metcalfe, which name he excused himself at this time from proposing, as he was not well enough acquainted with business men in Chicago to fill the place at the moment. He even intimated that he was willing to accept a nominee of Steele's, and this seemingly friendly suggestion had prevented any suspicion of the board being packed against him arising in Jack Steele's mind. He remembered this now with bitterness, when it was too late for remedy. Steele and his two colleagues could tie the vote of Metcalfe and his colleagues, but the chairman would have the casting voice. Since he had seen the determined face of Nicholson in the corridor of the Grand Pacific, he had no doubt that the Farwell brothers were the mere minions of Peter Berrington.

At last the trap laid for the public was sprung, and the public, as usual, was nipped. The success of the flotation was immediate, although applications did not come within a million of the sum asked for. After the flotation, Metcalfe's manner changed perceptibly. Steele watched him as a cat watches a mouse, and saw that he was now perturbed and apparently dissatisfied.

"Why!" cried Steele to him, the morning after the figures were known to them, "you don't seem nearly so happy as I

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expected. You surely did not look for the shares to be subscribed twice over?"

"No," said Metcalfe gloomily, "but the amount that has been subscribed shows what vitality there was in the scheme."

"Vitality!" cried Steele. "Why, bless my soul! you never doubted it, did you?"

"Oh, no, no," said Metcalfe hastily. "No. I told you we were dead sure of a third, and the actual subscriptions have more than justified my forecast."

"They have, indeed!" cried Steele enthusiastically. "I tell you what it is, Metcalfe, you're one of the first financiers of this country."

"Oh, nonsense!" cried Metcalfe, in no way cheered by the compliment.

"It isn't nonsense," said the genial Steele. "You've taken lessons from a first-rate master, for I look on Nicholson as one of the best men in the business."

When John Steele had plumped a similar pointed remark at Nicholson, not the slightest change of expression had disturbed that individual's calm visage. William Metcalfe kept his countenance under less perfect self-command. Steele's smile was gentle and friendly, but his keen eyes missed no note of the other's face. He watched a ruddy flush mount into his partner's cheeks. He noticed the embarrassed hesitation that accompanied his utterance.

"Mr. Nicholson! Ah, yes, certainly, certainly. He's not a friend of mine, of course, only a slight and recent acquaintance. Not the sort of man, Nicholson, to form friendships easily."

"Really?" asked Steele. "I met him only once, but he seemed rather genial."

"A great business man, a great business man," hurriedly muttered Metcalfe, obviously trying to get himself under control once more, playing for time, and not quite knowing what he was saying.

"So I have been informed," remarked Steele with easy carelessness. "One of the Amalgamated Soap group, I understand."

"Quite so," rejoined Metcalfe, his own man once more. "You see, Mr. Steele, I thought it would strengthen us tremendously if I could get a man like Nicholson to become interested in our project. The mere rumour that Amalgamated Soap was behind us would have been worth millions to us at the present juncture."

"I quite agree with you, Metcalfe. Amalgamated Soap is a name to conjure with. The public worship success, and there you have success in its most highly developed form. Why didn't you let me know? I might have been of some assistance to you."

"Well, in the first place, I did not wish to mention so important a matter until I was sure of carrying it through. No use of giving promises that you cannot make good. In the second place, I was not aware that you knew Nicholson."

"Oh, you were quite right; it was just a casual meeting, when we were introduced by a mutual friend. I don't flatter myself that my views would have any influence upon a man of Nicholson's standing in the financial world. But there is another part I don't quite understand. I admit the value of Nicholson's name to us, but why wasn't his connection divulged in time to influence subscriptions?"

"Well, you see, it was like this," hesitated Metcalfe, for a liar must be a most agile person, and Steele's questions had a fashion of touching the spot. "It was like this. I did not really conclude my arrangement with Nicholson until this morning. He's a very difficult man to handle, and he knows as well as anyone his own value. I imagine he wished to see which way the cat was going to jump before he committed himself."

"Well, Metcalfe, the cat has jumped entirely our way, even if the leap did not reach the furthest mark we staked out. The success of the subscriptions, then, induced Nicholson to join us?"

"Quite so, quite so, with the proviso that he is to have the vacant seat at the board, unless you have any objection."

"Objection? Certainly not. I am highly delighted with our acquisition. Besides, the seat at the board is entirely in your gift. I have no right to object, even if I wished to do so."

This was said with such an air of childlike simplicity that the perturbed Metcalfe, who seemingly still retained some remnants of conscience, showed confusion.

"True enough," he murmured. "Still, I should not like to nominate anyone who might be personally distasteful to you."

"I cannot imagine, Metcalfe, why you should suppose Nicholson could be distasteful to anyone. He is a tower of strength. I am delighted that you have induced him to join us."

"I am very much relieved to hear you say so," rejoined Metcalfe, who seemed bewildered at the turn things had taken.

The preliminary meetings of the company had all been held in Steele's offices. This

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afternoon, however, the directors were to forgather at the board-room of the bank in which the deposits of the subscribers were lodged. Steele was thus to beard the lion in the lion's own den, for he now no longer doubted that this bank was owned by Peter Berrington, Nicholson, and their colleagues. The appointed hour was three o'clock, and John Steele arrived on the stroke, the last man to appear. Nicholson stood in the centre of the group. Metcalfe, who had quite recovered his composure, said with a fine air of good comradeship—

"I think you two gentlemen have met before, so a formal introduction is not necessary between Mr. Steele and Mr. Nicholson."

"I had the somewhat chastened satisfaction of encountering Mr. Steele once under conditions I am not likely to forget," said Nicholson quietly, with impressive geniality. "I count myself one of Mr. Steele's numerous admirers."

"It is kind of you to say that, Mr. Nicholson," replied Jack, extending his hand, while that winning smile of his played about his lips. "On the occasion to which you refer, I was so unhappy as to be placed in opposition to Amalgamated Soap. I am the more gratified, therefore, to find myself in some measure a colleague of so distinguished a coterie, even if I am admitted into but an outer temple, as it were."

"Your gratification, Mr. Steele, is as nothing compared to my own at seeing you here amongst us."

Jack Steele bowed his acknowledgment. It was if the lion had begun by complimenting Daniel.

"Gentlemen, I think the hour has struck," said the grave Farwell senior, taking his seat at the head of the long table.

The directors ranged themselves on either side, Nicholson at the right hand of the chairman, Metcalfe next him, and the younger Farwell the third on that side. Opposite Nicholson sat John Steele, and beside him his two nominees. Thus quietly the lines of battle were formed, and to all outward appearance the meeting might have been supposed to be a love-feast. Bunches of papers were heaped before the chairman, while writing-pads, pens, and ink were placed in front of each director. Steele, assuming a negligent, unconcerned air that was admirably put on, wondered what particular battery Nicholson would unmask. The latter's eyes were bent on his writing-pad, and he tried one nib after another, as if to find a pen to his satisfaction. The chairman, in droning voice, recited the history of the company up to its going before the public, read documents, and gave various figures which it might be supposed were familiar to all there assembled. There was silence around the table. Nicholson never looked up until the chairman announced the amount of public subscription.

"What's that, Mr. Farwell?" he said quietly, raising his head. "What are the figures?"

Farwell repeated them.

"And how much do you say is the authorised capital of the company?"

Farwell named the sum.

"Then we are a million short?"

"Nearly so, Mr. Nicholson."

Nicholson's face became set and stern. Slowly he turned towards Metcalfe on his right hand, whose eyes shifted uneasily from one to another without ever resting on John Steele.

"I understood, sir," said Nicholson very slowly, as if weighing his words, "that all the money was in the bank?"

"I told you, sir," replied the hesitating Metcalfe, "that there was in the bank all the capital we thought necessary."

"Necessary?" echoed Nicholson, in cold, even tones. "We make a demand upon the public. We state that the value of our property is so much. The public responds by offering us a million less. Necessary? I have never yet had anything to do with a company whose capital was not over-subscribed. I have never yet sanctioned the sending out of letters of allotment unaccompanied by letters of regret."

John Steele had difficulty in keeping the smile from his lips. The tones of righteous indignation were not in the least overdone. The expression of virtuous disapproval at being tricked, on the splendidly chiselled, clear-cut face, was marvellous in its reserve; in its hint of unlimited power behind. Jack felt, rather than saw, the uneasiness of the two colleagues by his side, who realised, without exactly understanding why, that things were going desperately wrong, like an engineer who finds an open bridge in front of him, and finds the brakes will not act.

"Admirably acted," said Jack Steele to himself. "We pay good money to go to the theatre, and yet there is such histrionic talent as this in the business world!"

Then aloud, in a voice mildly protesting, he said—

"Nevertheless, Mr. Nicholson, the million shares left on our hands are quite marketable.

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"'I have pleasure in seconding the motion.'"

We have ample capital to go on with, and Mr. Metcalfe will assure you that the factories themselves are all on a paying basis. You cannot surely mean that having arrived at this stage, we are not to proceed to allotment, Mr. Nicholson?"

"That is exactly what I *do* mean," replied Nicholson, speaking as mildly as his opponent had done. "My colleagues would never consent to admit connection with a company formed in the circumstances now before us. Our duty to the public——"

"Mr. Nicholson, I quite appreciate your position, and that of your colleagues, Mr. Peter Berrington and the rest. The public would indeed be shocked to learn that Peter, one of our religious pillars, could be guilty of anything in the least oblique. As cleanliness in next to godliness, we are all aware that Amalgamated Soap stands close to the Pearly Gates, and the only thing we fear about Peter is that when he gets to heaven he shall find another saint of the same name there before him, which may lead to confusion of identity. I take it for granted, Mr. Nicholson, that you are about to propose a motion requiring all this money to be returned to the subscribers. If you will put that motion, I shall be very happy to second it."

An electric silence fell on the group, the kind of silence which on a hot summer's night precedes a clap of thunder. Nicholson drew a long breath and squared his shoulders.

Metcalfe gazed in fascinated dismay at Jack Steele. Even the Farwells showed traces of human interest. Nicholson did not put his motion. After a few moments of this embarrassing stillness, he said gently—

"Perhaps Mr. John Steele has something else to propose?"

"No, I have not," said Jack; "but with the chairman's permission, there being no motion before the house, I should like to make you a personal explanation which may save future trouble."

The chairman nodded permission, and Nicholson said—

"We shall be interested to hear anything you say, Mr. Steele."

"To return the money is, of course, to wreck the company. Hitherto this company has been associated with the names of John Steele and William Metcalfe. To-morrow the sensation of the daily journals all over the country will be the collapse of the big scheme which those two men undertook to float. Mr. William Metcalfe is unknown in Chicago, is but a stool-pigeon well paid for the part he has enacted, and he disappears from the scene. John Steele stands the brunt. All the funds he possesses are in Amalgamated Soap's bank. His affairs are in the hands of Amalgamated Soap lawyers. One legal difficulty after another comes up; there is a long fight over the remains, and at last Amalgamated Soap steps in and sweeps up the *débris*. They are in possession of valuable property scattered throughout the west in the beet-sugar line, they announce their possession and the reconstruction of the company, and everything is beautiful, but John Steele is mangled in the collision, with no insurance, even for his relatives.

"When I learned the other week that Mr. Nicholson was interested in this company, I felt like the man who had gone down into a cave and unexpectedly clutched a huge bear at the black bottom of it. That man did not stop to question the intentions of the bear: he simply got out. I followed the example. In the wheat deal Mr. Nicholson knows of, I made several millions, and ever since then certain capitalists in this city have begged me if I fell in with a similar good thing, not to hug it all to myself, but allow them to come in on the ground floor, and I promised to do so. The moment I learnt Mr. Nicholson was to have anything to do with the beet-sugar project, I went directly to these capitalists, pledged them to secrecy, guaranteed that Amalgamated Soap was head and shoulders in this deal, and that no less a person than Mr Nicholson himself would assume charge of the company. Gentlemen, they bit instantly. I sold out my share to them for the money it had cost me, and fifty per cent. additional; and, furthermore, I got the cash. Now I shall read you a letter which will appear in the Chicago newspapers to-morrow morning.

"'To the Editor,

"'Sir,—The Consolidated Beet Sugar Company, with which my name has hitherto been associated, and which has been so splendidly supported by western capital, as indicated by the subscriptions now in the bank, will hereafter be in charge of the eminent financiers associated with Amalgamated Soap. I am pleased to state that this will be almost entirely a Chicago enterprise, and that some of the best men in this city have bought out my interests therein. I have only to add that Mr. Nicholson himself is now a member of the board of directors, and nothing further need be said to assure all concerned of the immense prosperity which awaits this company, and the far-reaching advantages it will offer both to agriculture and manufacture in the west.

"'Yours sincerely,

"'John Steele.'

"And now, gentlemen," said Jack Steele, as he folded up the copy of this letter and placed it in his inside pocket, "nothing remains for me to do but to resign my seat on the board, as I am no longer interested in the least in this company. But before handing in my formal resignation, I shall be pleased to second any motion Mr. Nicholson cares to propose."

"Mr. Chairman," said Nicholson, quite unruffled, "I move we now proceed to allotment."

"I have pleasure in seconding the motion," said John Steele, rising, bowing to the company, and leaving the room.

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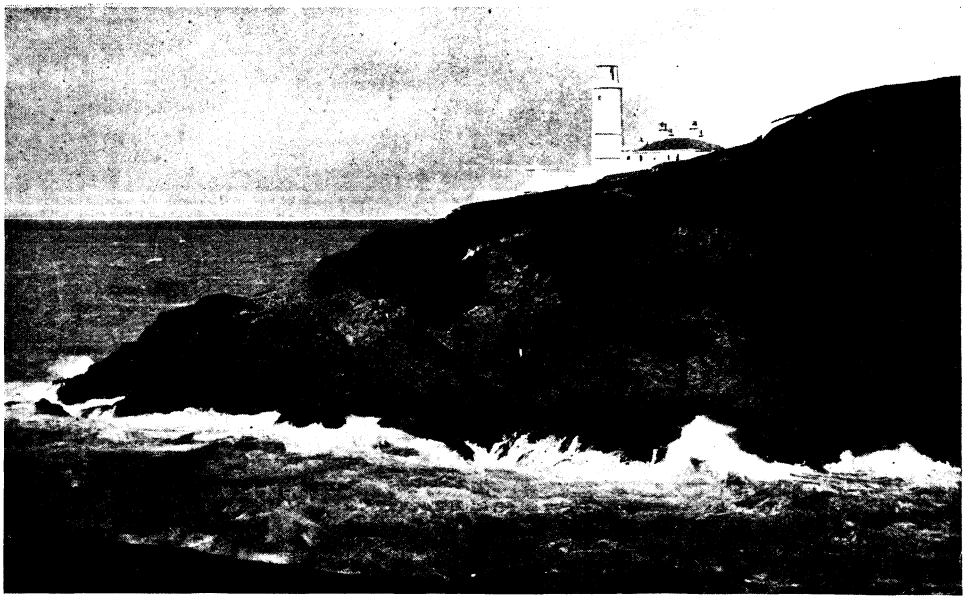

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TREVOSE HEAD AND LIGHT.

LIGHTHOUSES.

BY GEORGE LORIMER.

THE shores of these Islands, in many places as dangerous as any in the world, are dotted all round with an elaborate system of signals for the guidance of mariners. Every night of the year on our coasts there shine or flash forth bright starry beams from more than a thousand lighthouses and lightships, upon whose construction and equipment the most profound scientific knowledge and the most marvellous mechanical skill have been brought to bear in the service of humanity.

There is no need to waste words either on the enormous practical advantages that commerce gains from lighthouses, or on the beneficence generally of the object with which they are built and operated. With regard to the latter point of view, however, I think I shall be pardoned if I recall a little-known, perhaps forgotten, incident which occurred in one of the early chapters, so to speak, of the fine, romantic story of lighthouses and their builders—connected in this instance with the ever-famous Eddystone.

Photo by] [*F. Frith & Co., Ltd., Reigate.*

FLAMBOROUGH LIGHTHOUSE.

The first Eddystone Lighthouse, a curious and fantastic structure, built with something of the whimsical fancifulness of a Chinese pagoda, disappeared in the historic "Great Storm" of 1703, carrying with it at the same time its occupants, amongst whom was its architect, Winstanley. When the second Eddystone, that of Rudyerd, was being erected in 1707, a French privateer swooped down upon the rock, captured the workmen, and took them off

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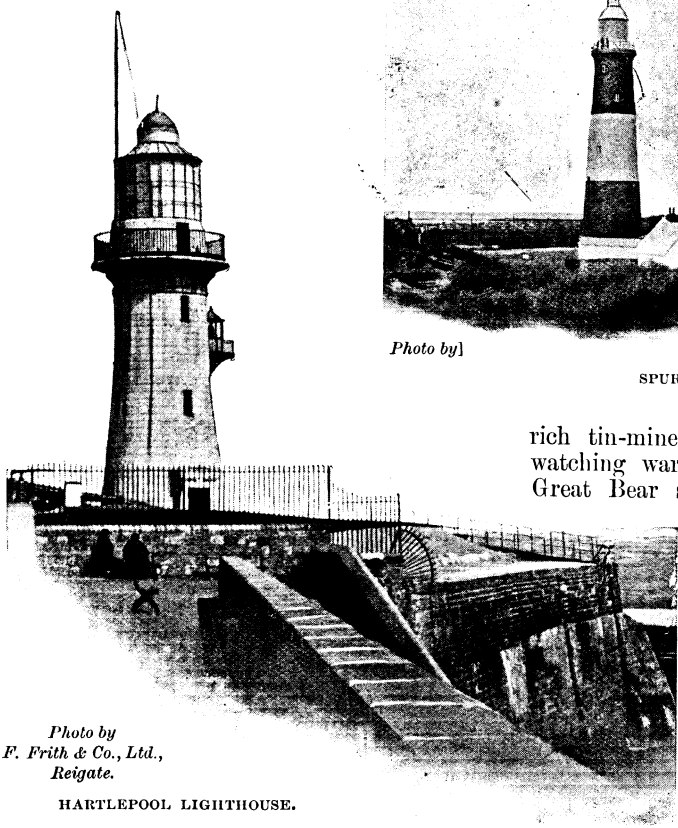
to France, where they were put in prison. Louis XIV., then King of France, heard of the matter. To his honour, he liberated the lighthouse men, and put their captors in their room, justifying his action by the significant statement that "though he was at war with England, he was not at war with mankind." And he sent them back to England loaded with presents.



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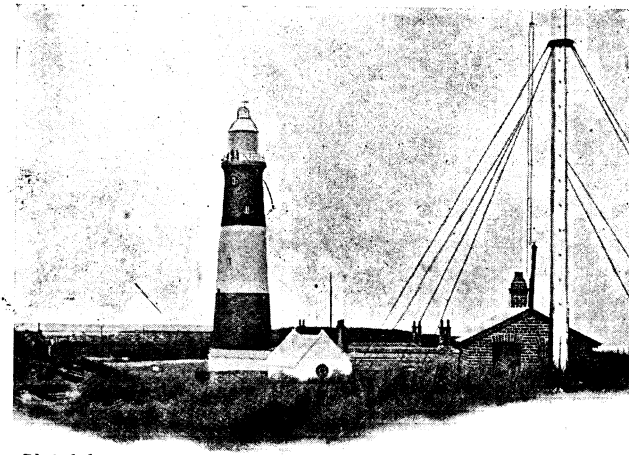
HARTLEPOOL LIGHTHOUSE.



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SPURN HEAD.

In ancient times lighthouses were, almost literally, "pillars of fire." Still earlier, the sailor, out at night on the open sea, steered his course by the stars alone. Thus did the trader of Tyre and Sidon, on his way to the rich tin-mines of Britain, guide his ship, watching warily the while, what time the Great Bear stood high in the heavens or dipped far across the northern depths. Next came the beacon, the fire lighted on a headland or promontory. Then followed the pharos, the light-tower, the pillar of fire, the most celebrated of which was the Pharos of Alexandria, a structure of white marble, on whose summit there blazed a huge bonfire of logs saturated with pitch. One of the Ptolemys built that wonder of the world in the third century B.C. Greece, Carthage, and Rome set up somewhat similar

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LIZARD LIGHT.

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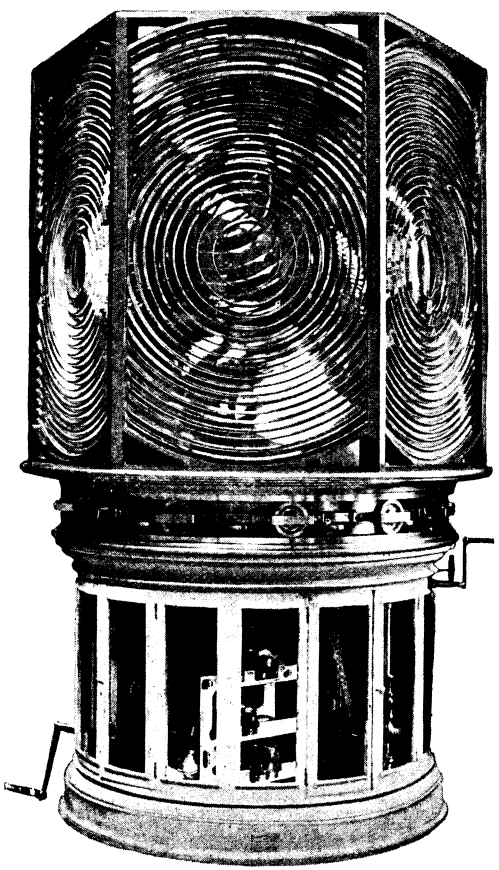
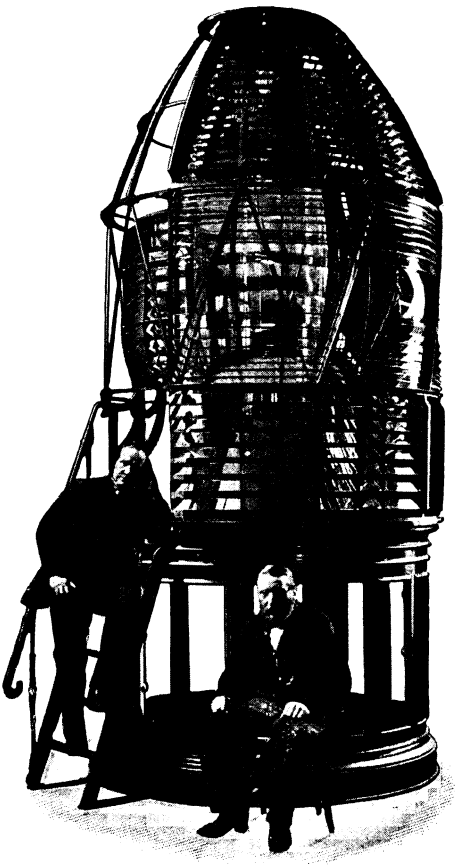
towers along the coast of the Mediterranean and elsewhere. Vestiges of them are to be seen to this day on the shores of England, France, and Spain; and for two thousand years lighthouses were all of the pharos type —open wood fires of great size, or fires in tremendous braziers, chauffers, or cages of iron, placed on the top of high towers. In some cases coal was used instead of wood. The Cordouan, at the mouth of the Garonne, was kindled with oak logs in 1610. The Lanterna of Genoa, still the tallest lighthouse building in existence, was lighted with wood. The Lizard was a coal fire in 1812, and St. Bees ceased to be one only in 1822. The Isle of May remained a coal light for nearly two centuries. The Eddystone was at first lit with tallow candles, and then with wax. Oil lamps were not used before 1730, and then only on a very small scale. It was the Argand burner (1783), and the reflector of Teulère, which brought about the first great change in lighthouse construction and illumination.



FIRST ORDER REVOLVING LIGHT, SIX SIDES OF 60°, EDDYSTONE TYPE.

Minicoy Island, West Coast of India, 1883.



DIOPTRIC LIGHTHOUSE APPARATUS, TYPE OF A FIRST ORDER FIXED LIGHT.

Since that time lighthouse illumination has developed very considerably, proceeding by three well-defined, successive stages. The invention of parabolic mirrors led to the adoption of what is known as the *catoptric* system of lighting, wherein the light or flame of the lamp was reflected. As far back as 1763 parabolic reflectors, formed of facets of silvered glass, were in operation in the Mersey lighthouses, and at the commencement of last century perfected reflectors of silver-plated copper were used at Inchkeith. The second stage came with the invention of the *dioptric* system by Augustin Fresnel, a Frenchman, in 1819. By this method the light was refracted by means of lenses—the result being an enormous gain in the intensity of the transmitted beams. The first lighthouse in the Kingdom to receive a Fresnel apparatus was that of Inchkeith, in 1835.

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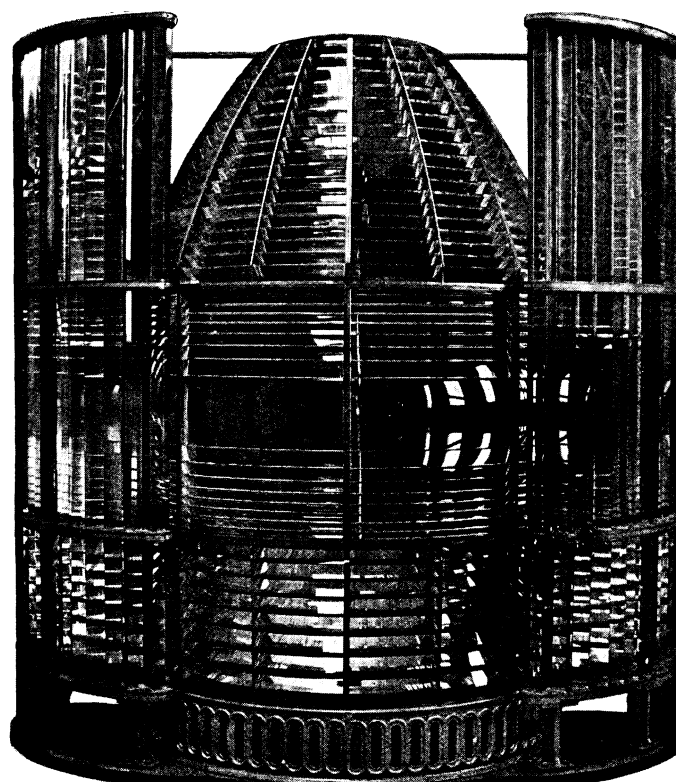
Between 1849 and 1852 a still further improvement, termed the *holophotal* system, was elaborated by Thomas Stevenson, a member of the family which has given many great engineers to this country. Defined briefly, in this system, as the name implies, *all* the light can be utilised and thrown in the desired direction, in the catoptric arrangement by reflecting agents, in the dioptric by refracting lenses, and in the catadioptric by both in combination.

I shall consider the beautiful and most interesting instruments employed in lighthouse illumination when I come to speak, presently, of a visit I paid a short time ago, on behalf of the WINDSOR, to the famous lighthouse works of Messrs. Chance Brothers and Co., Ltd., the only industry of the kind in existence within the wide area of the British Empire. First of all, however, there must be told the fascinating story of the building of lighthouses — by which I mean the actual construction of the towers supporting the lanterns and the lamps or lights. The making of perfect lenses, mirrors and lights "of purest ray serene," and the nice adjustment of means to ends, are matters, of course, thought and wrought out carefully, patiently, cleverly, and scientifically in the offices and works of such firms as that of the Messrs. Chance; but the "human interest" centres chiefly in the tale of the efforts—not infrequently the heroic efforts—of the engineers and masons who have erected the lighthouses themselves. This will best be seen from one or two examples. To multiply instances would render this article too long.

Let it be premised that the majority of lighthouses are built on the mainland or on islands of some size, and call for no more than ordinary skill and effort in their construction. It is when the engineer has to find his site on a partially or totally submerged rock, exposed to the full shock of the waves, and to give fierce and persistent battle to tides, currents, eddies, breakers, and all the winds of heaven, that lighthouse building takes on the heroic character, evoking the highest qualities of courage and endurance. Again, it may be that he is compelled to erect his lighthouse not upon a rock, but on shifting sands, or to struggle with the iceberg and the ice-pack. Two of the most notable of these triumphs of lighthouse building are Minot's Ledge, off the coast of Massachusetts, and Skerryvore, a short distance from the Island of Tyree.

To-day, "rising sheer out of the sea, like a huge stone cannon, mouth upward," as Longfellow wrote, the lighthouse of Minot's Ledge stands near the entrance of Massachusetts Bay, some fifteen miles south-east of Boston. The Ledge itself is a rock barely visible at extreme low tide, lying in the full swell of the ocean. Forty-three ships had been dashed to pieces upon it in a period of thirty years. Prior to 1851 a small light, held in position by iron pillars, had burned above it, but in that year a terrible storm swept light and pillars away. In 1855, an American engineer, Alexander by name, who



FIRST ORDER FIXED LIGHT, WITH VERTICAL CONDENSING PRISMS.
Bidston Lighthouse, near Birkenhead.

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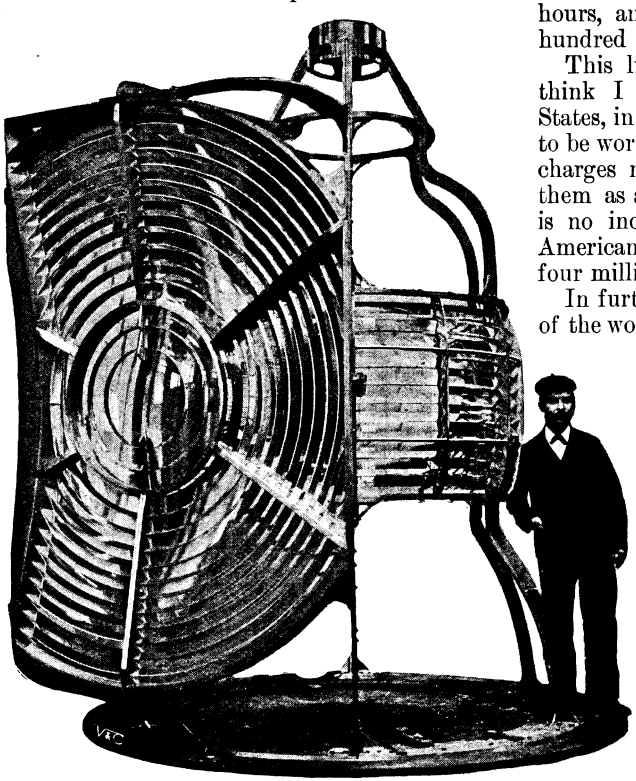
is variously termed "General" or "Captain" Alexander, contracted to build a stone tower on the Ledge, 106 feet high and 30 feet in diameter at the base.

Now, part of the Ledge was always under water, and the rest of it, even at low tide, was never uncovered except for two or three



HYPER-RADIANT THREE-FLASH LIGHT, 1,330 MM. RADIUS.
Pladda Lighthouse, Scotland.

hours. What with the waves and the slipperiness of the rock from seaweed, Alexander on his first visit could not keep his footing. His men and himself, fighting wind, wave, and rock with the energy of despair, were able only to cut four or five small foot-holes in the rock during the whole of their first season. In the next they managed to put up an iron platform twenty feet above low water, but that very winter a ship was driven on to the Ledge by a storm, carrying away the platform and undoing in one night the work of two years. The attempt was renewed the following spring, and the third year saw four foundation-stones securely laid; by the end of the fifth year the six lower courses of the tower were completed, and the Ledge was conquered. It would be easy to draw harrowing pictures of the workmen clinging for dear life to the black rock while the waves swept over them, and so on, but the best idea of the difficulties and perils they had to encounter may be derived from the simple but abundantly suggestive facts that during the whole of the first season they were able to work for no more than thirty hours, and during the second for only one hundred and fifty-seven.

This lighthouse cost £60,000, and here I think I must point out that the United States, in a spirit which everyone must admit to be worthy and noble in the highest degree, charges no dues for its lights, but presents them as a free offering to all the world. It is no inconsiderable gift, for it costs the American Government annually not far from four millions of dollars.

In further illustration of the heroic nature of the work of the lighthouse builders, I have selected, from among many British examples of it, the Skerryvore, as its history is perhaps not so well known as, say, that of the Bell Rock or the Eddystone. Alan Stevenson, son of Robert Stevenson, who constructed the Bell Rock on Inchcape, built the Skerryvore; he has left an account of it in an interesting but now forgotten volume.

Skerryvore, probably the most dangerous of all the skerries in our waters, is a nearly submerged reef off the coast of Argyllshire, exposed to the full force of the Atlantic, and surrounded by innumerable ledges and sharp points of rock—the whole constituting what seafaring folk call "foul ground" of the worst description along a line of some seven or eight miles. This being the case, it will readily be imagined that it was a matter of no little skill in seamanship to approach the place in fine weather. The weather, however, was very rarely fine, and when storms arose—as they do on that coast with extraordinary suddenness and intensity—the ship from which the work was prosecuted was frequently in the direst peril. No secure anchorage could be found, and the vessel often drifted at the mercy of the waves. The rock itself, while building operations were going on, was swept ever and anon by the icy waters of the Atlantic, while the intrepid workers, with limbs and bodies benumbed, had to save themselves from destruction as best they might. On one

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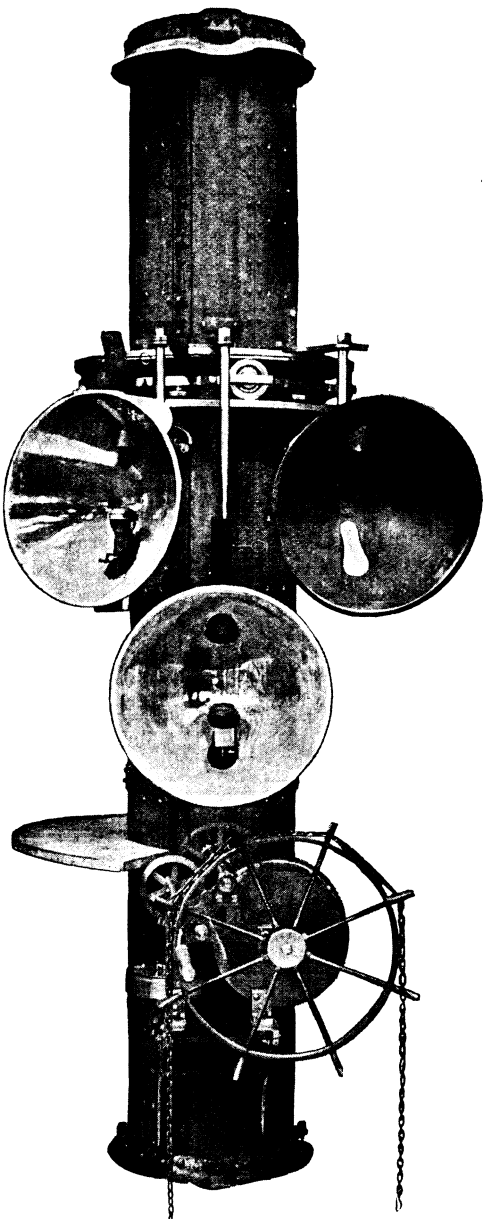
occasion the "crew" on the rock were cut off from the ship for days, and were within an ace of dying from starvation. So terrible, so exhausting was the struggle, that it is



LIGHTSHIP PARABOLIC REFLECTOR AND SPRING CLOCK.

scarcely surprising to learn that a portion of the "crew" at one time mutinied. Still, through fair or foul weather, the work went on, until a splendid sea-tower, greater than the Bell Rock or the Eddystone, sent its warning light across the wild wastes of the sea for a distance of more than twenty miles.

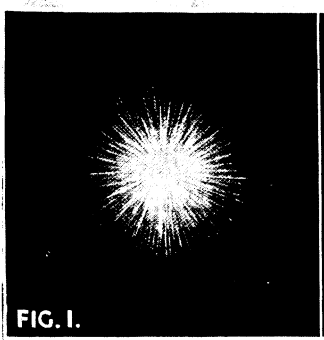
The Skerryvore was one of the costliest of our lighthouses, the sum expended upon it being £87,000.

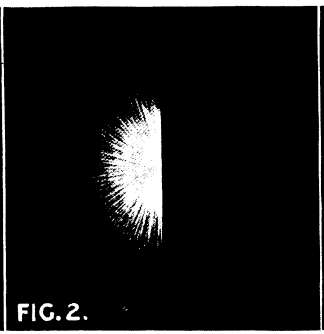
My readers are doubtless familiar with the appearance of one or more of the great stone-tower lighthouses round our coasts, such as those already mentioned, or, to quote others, the Bishop (Scilly Isles), the Dubh Artach (Scotland), the Chicken Rock (Isle of Man), and the Stroma (Shetland Islands). It is unnecessary, therefore, to give any particular or even general description of these towers; it is enough to say that they are the monumental works of engineers like the Stevensons and the Douglases. Smethwick, where the works of Messrs. Chance Brothers and Co. are situated, is in the neighbourhood of Birmingham—that city in or about which everything in the world that can be made is made. It will surprise no one acquainted with the vast and multifarious enterprises of the Capital of the Midlands to learn that the sole lighthouse factory in the Empire is located near there.

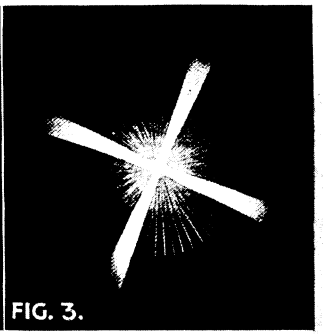
Beginning years before as manufacturers of glass, it is just half a century since Messrs. Chance showed at the Great Exhibition of 1851 a specimen lighthouse apparatus of the first order, consisting of the optical glass and its framing. Messrs. Cookson, of Newcastle, had previously made dioptric lenses for certain English lighthouses. It is said that the first efforts of Messrs. Chance entailed large pecuniary loss, but they have gone on steadily to the present time, with little or no official aid or encouragement—it is far otherwise in France, where the Government subsidises the French lighthouse builders—but with ever-increasing success. For this they are mainly indebted to the ability and untiring energy of Sir James Chance. In 1856 and 1857 they sent out their first sets of apparatus—to Rathlin Island and Galway Bay in Ireland, to Bardsey Island in Wales, to Lundy Island in the Bristol Channel, and to Rhu Val in Scotland. Since that time they have constructed more than a thousand lights of all dimensions, and they have planted them on the shores of every sea.

Every night, year in and year out, through fair weather and foul, these lights, that owe their brilliance and their power to the great works at Smethwick, are gleaming on the

APPARATUS FOR FIXED LIGHTS AND FLASHING LIGHTS ROTATED ON ROLLERS.







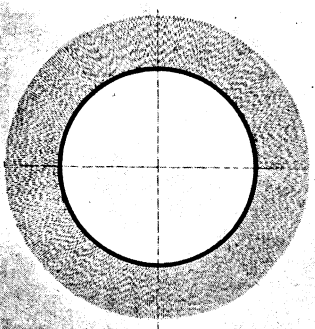


FIG 1.
FIXED LIGHT OF 360°

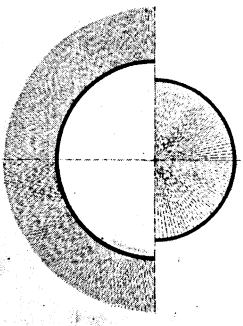


FIG. 2.
FIXED LIGHT OF 180° AND DIOPTRIC MIRROR OF 180°

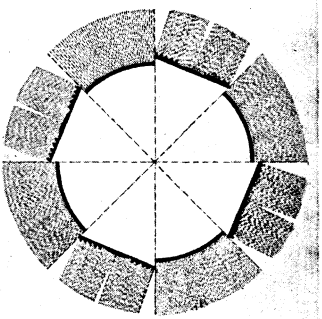
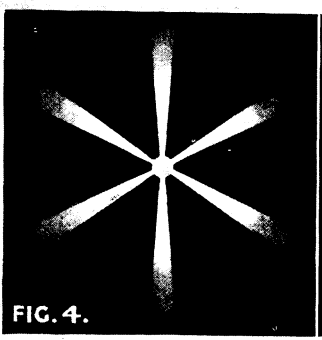
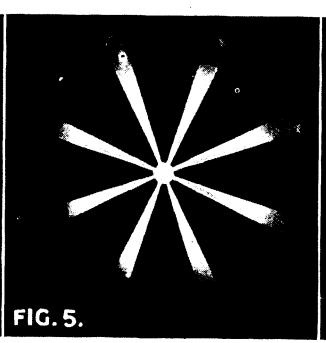
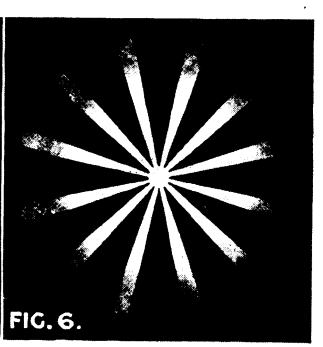


FIG. 3.
FIXED AND FLASHING LIGHT:
4 FLASHING PANELS OF 45° EACH.
4 FIXED PANELS OF 45° EACH.







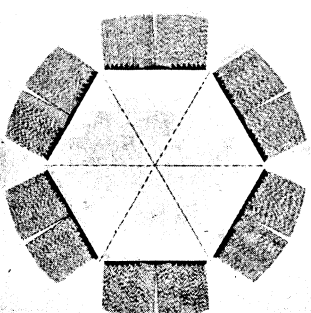


FIG. 4.
SINGLE FLASHING LIGHT:
6 PANELS OF 60°

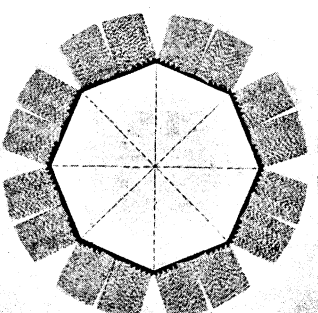


FIG. 5.
SINGLE FLASHING LIGHT:
8 PANELS OF 45°

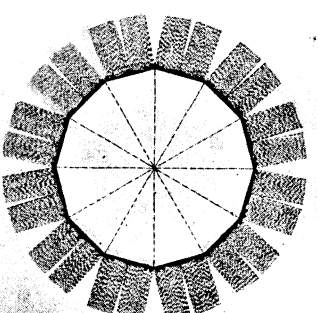


FIG. 6.
SINGLE FLASHING LIGHT:
12 PANELS OF 30°

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perilous rocks and frowning headlands of the coasts of America, Australia, and the Argentine, of China, Chili, and Corea, of Spain and Siam, of Japan and Java, and India and Russia, and of Mexico, to say nothing of the countless points of danger to the mariner around the shores of our own British Isles.

With the advance of civilisation has grown the demand for these fiery sentinels of the seas, and the reputation of Messrs. Chance for this class of work being widespread, the business of lighthouse building and equipping has steadily increased, involving big additions to the works at Smethwick and the employment of many hands, while the working plant and equipment generally have been brought up to the utmost point of efficiency. One of the managing directors of Messrs. Chance was kind enough to take me over their establishment, to talk to me of what was being done in it, and to tell me a good deal about lighthouses generally. Previous to my visit, I was under the impression that Messrs. Chance constructed lighthouses, whether with towers of stone or iron, from start to finish; but I found that while this is the case with respect to iron towers, it is not so as regards stone towers—for the latter they build the lantern, the optical apparatus, the lamp, the mechanism for regulating the flashing of the light, and the rest of the interior machinery. With the construction of the masonry works they are not concerned. The stone tower, it may be explained, is erected to withstand wave action, and is invariably placed on low-lying rocks, and wherever the structure is exposed to the persistent force of tide and breaker. The iron tower has only to resist wind action, and is, therefore, quite suitable for erection on lofty headlands, while having the advantage of being much more economical than the more elaborately built towers of stone.

There was even lately in building in the workshops of Messrs. Chance a cast-iron tower 100 ft. high. This new lighthouse—one of the loftiest, I believe, of its particular kind—is designed for erection on Tasman Island, in Tasmania. When finished at the works, it is taken to pieces again and shipped to its destination, where it is rebuilt and fully equipped as a lighthouse. In this case the Smethwick firm are really lighthouse builders, and to watch the evolution of this iron "pillar of fire" is as fascinating as anything in the industrial world. Several of these iron lighthouses have been constructed for various coasts. A cylinder of steel forms

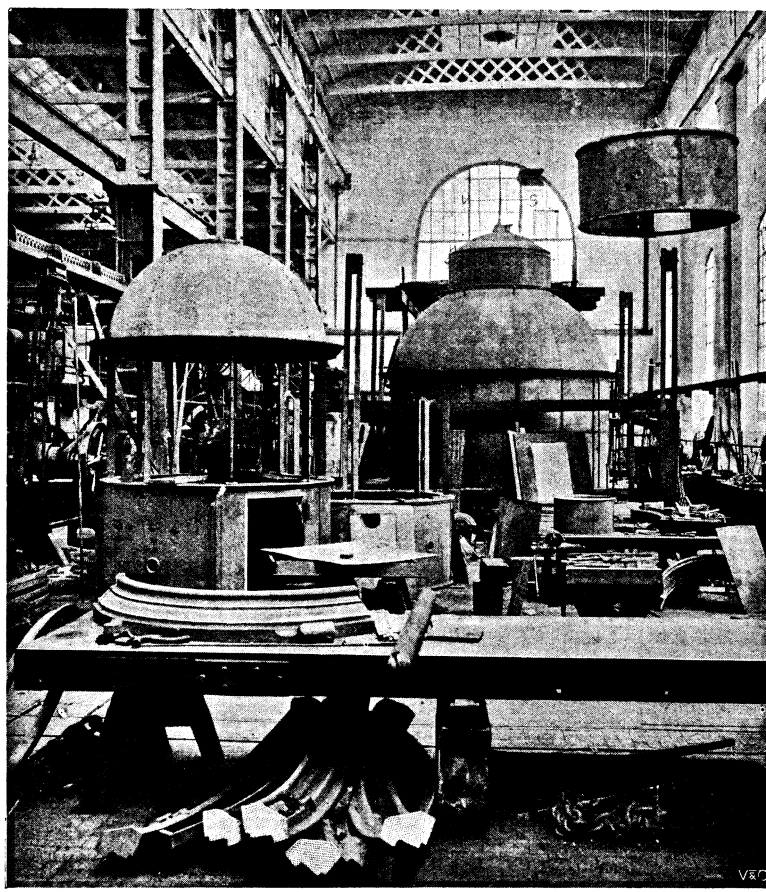

Photo by [*Whitlock, Birmingham.*

IN THE LIGHTHOUSE FACTORY.

Photo by] [*F. Frith & Co., Ltd., Reigate.*

BISHOP LIGHT, OFF SCILLY ISLES.

the main shaft or column, and smaller columns of cast-iron form the surrounding supports. Hardly half-way up the great frame is the keeper's chamber, an apartment composed of steel girders and wrought-iron plates. Further aloft is the lantern. The whole construction of these iron lighthouses is an astonishing instance of combined strength, lightness, and durability. I was shown a picture of one of the earlier erections of this type, before and after a storm. Trees had been swept down or uprooted, but the light, not ungraceful, tower of steel and iron remained uninjured.

But, after all, a tower of this kind, however perfectly adapted for its work, is only an ordinary example of mechanical engineering. It is the lantern, its scientifically devised optical apparatus, and all its ingenious accessories, which claim paramount attention. Lanterns vary in diameter from five to fourteen or sixteen feet, though in very exceptional instances a diameter of eighteen feet has been attained. Whatever their size, they are all constructed with a care and precision which attaches to the making of a watch or any other small but elaborate mechanism. The average price of a good lantern, by the way, is some £1,200.

The perfect lantern is of circular form throughout, and stands on a plinth or pedestal, usually of cast-iron, of sufficient height to carry an inside and an outside gallery for cleaning purposes. It is provided with half-inch or other suitable thicknesses of plate-glass of the finest quality, set in frames of gun-metal, a material which experience has proved capable of resisting the action of salt water. The glass must be strong enough to hold out against the extremes of wind and weather, and yet so translucent as to intercept the least possible light from the lenses. And the whole must be so constructed that there shall be abundant ventilation to sustain the lamp and to refresh those who tend it. This is secured by means of a ventilator from the copper cupola which crowns the lantern.

In the older lighthouses many of the lanterns have polygonal glazing, but the superiority of circular glazing has been so completely demonstrated that Messrs. Chance have ceased to make the former for some years past. A notable distinction of the Smethwick works is that from the beginning all the glass required in the firm's lighthouse building has been made there ; indeed, they are the only constructors of lighthouse

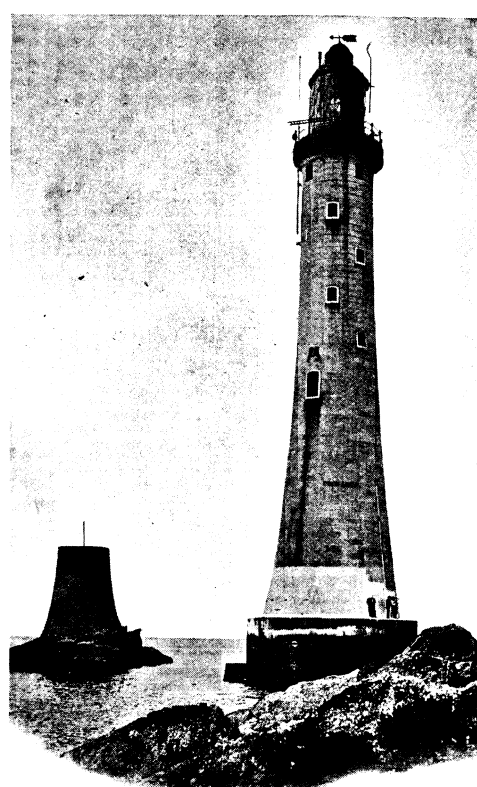

Photo by] [*F. Frith & Co., Ltd., Reigate.*

EDDYSTONE LIGHTHOUSE.

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apparatus who manufacture their own optical agents. At the time of my visit the glass furnaces were not in operation, but I was shown the very special machinery for grinding and polishing the prisms, lenses, mirrors, and other objects at work in the various stages and processes of manufacture. A lens or prism, when ready for being placed in the apparatus through which the light passes across the sea, is a very beautiful thing, obtained from the rough casting, however, only after an infinitude of mechanical and manual labour. Each piece—or shall I call it bar or disc?—of glass must be free from blemish, and of precisely the exact size and shape required. For "hyperradial" lights, about which I shall speak presently, the necessary optical apparatus, made up of a large number of prismatic rings converging to a central lens, costs from £2,000 to £3,000 alone.

The characteristic features which differentiate the light given by one lighthouse from that given by another have been introduced for various reasons. The substitution of revolving in place of fixed sea-lights arises naturally enough from the increasing number of bright fixed lights on ships and on shore. The group-flashing system, which is acknowledged to afford the best characteristic for revolving lights, was brought forward by Messrs. Chance in 1874, under the superintendence of their then scientific adviser, the late Dr. John Hopkinson, who invented it, and it has been adopted by all maritime countries. Mixed lights of fixed and revolving sections are no longer considered satisfactory, and, what strikes the outsider as being very remarkable, colour is being gradually abandoned. Of recent years "lightning lights" (*feux éclairs*) have come into use, and this new system, in which the weight of the apparatus is supported on mercury, and the friction consequently reduced to a minimum, has made it possible to rotate the optical apparatus at a much higher speed than formerly, with the result that the duration of the flash has, in many cases, been reduced to one-tenth of a second.

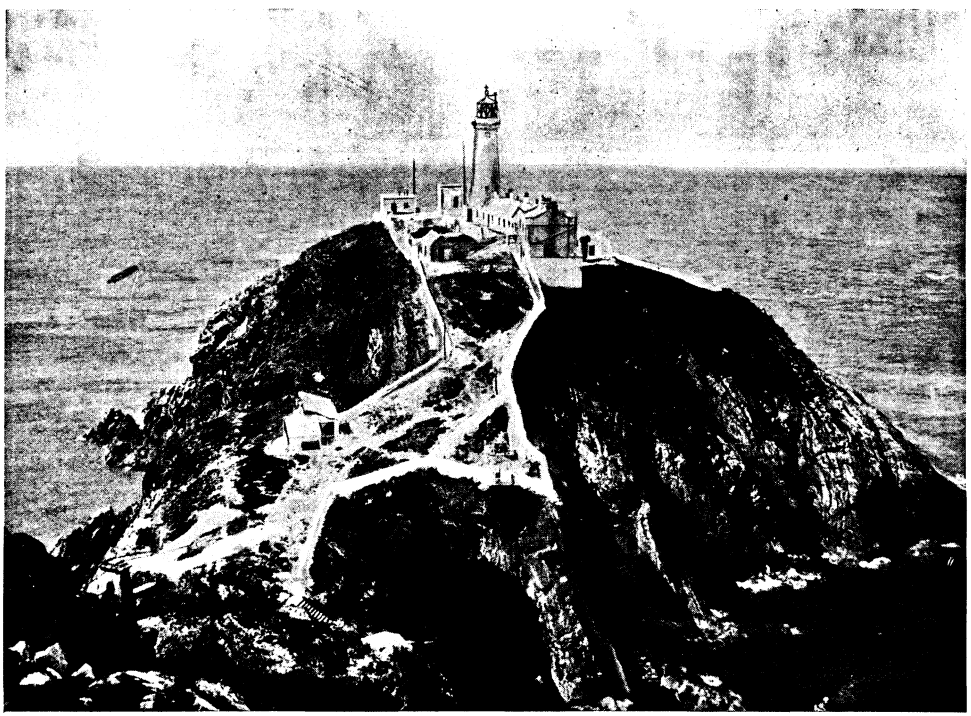

Photo by] [*F. Frith & Co., Ltd., Reigate.*

HOLYHEAD STACK LIGHT.

This principle of revolution on mercury instead of on rollers is one of two valuable improvements effected in lighthouse work in recent years. Not only does it secure a great reduction in the amount of friction necessitated, but it means a saving in the driving force. Whereas—to take a typical South

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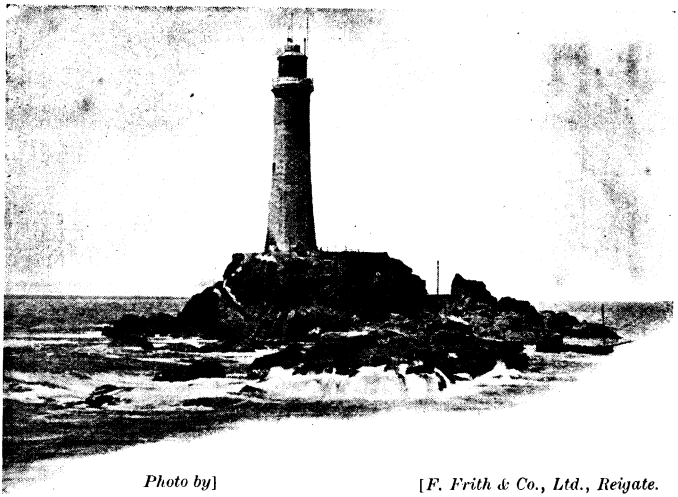


Photo by] [*F. Frith & Co., Ltd., Reigate.*

THE LONGSHIPS LIGHTHOUSE.

Coast light as an instance—the clock-weight required on the old roller system was one ton, the revolutions in mercury take only about seven cwt., or little more than a third of the former weight. The new system has already been installed in several of the most important lighthouses around our coasts, one of the latest applications being to the well-known St. Catherine's light. There the optic is mounted on a revolving table, which is carried upon a cast-iron annular float revolving in a bath of mercury. In this case it takes 816 lb. of mercury to float the revolving apparatus.

The other important improvement, practically originated, I believe, only in the last two or three years, is the substitution of incandescent oil burners for the oil-wick burners of former days. The same oil is used—light mineral oil—but it is vaporised, with the result of a gain in economy of consumption and an increased intensity. Let me demonstrate this briefly, just as it was explained to me. The six-wick oil burner, with a flame of $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, gave a candle-power of 700; the incandescent oil burner, with a mantle of nearly $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches diameter, gives a candle-power up to 2,400. The intensity is threefold, while the oil consumption is reduced by a fourth. The six-wick burner used to consume half a gallon of oil per hour, but the incandescent burner needs only two and a half pints per hour. A typical incandescent burner light is that on Beachy Head.

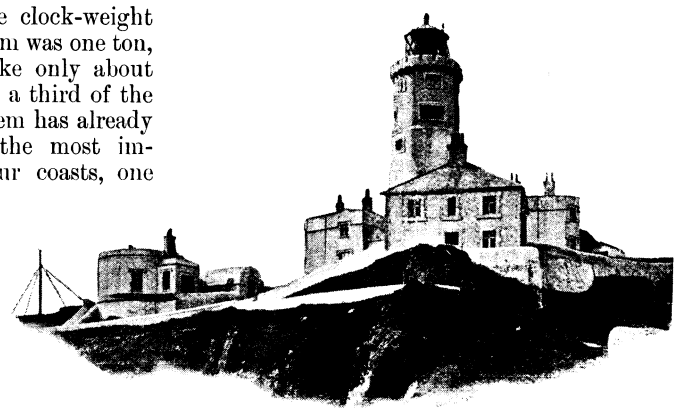
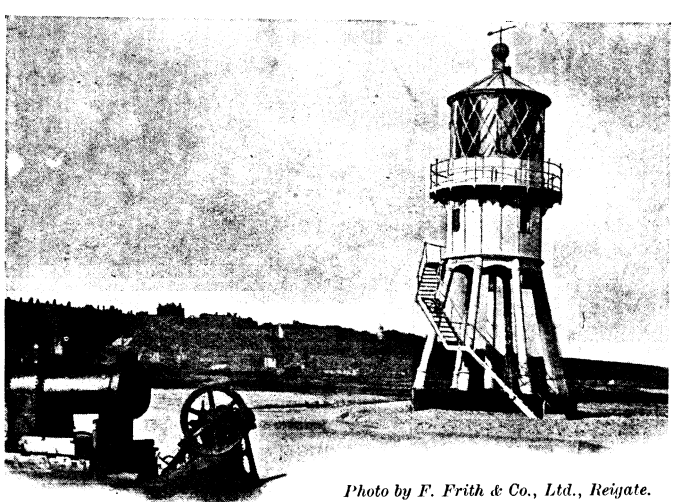


Photo by] [*F. Frith & Co., Ltd., Reigate.*

START LIGHTHOUSE.



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LOWESTOFT: LOWER LIGHT.

So far the electric light has been sparingly adopted. Only four among the many lights controlled by Trinity House are electrically illuminated, these being St. Catherine's, the Lizard, the South Foreland, and Souter

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Point on the northern coast. Electricity is utilised in several of the smaller lighthouses, such as serve in estuaries and harbours, and are under the authority of individual Harbour Boards; but, generally speaking, it has been found that the electric light is very sensitive to the state of the atmosphere, and in thick, foggy weather, it is said, it parts with its power in a much greater ratio than does either oil- or gaslight. On the French coast there are upwards of a dozen first-class electrically illuminated lighthouses, but in the existing Lizard light England can boast the most powerful of all marine lights in the world.

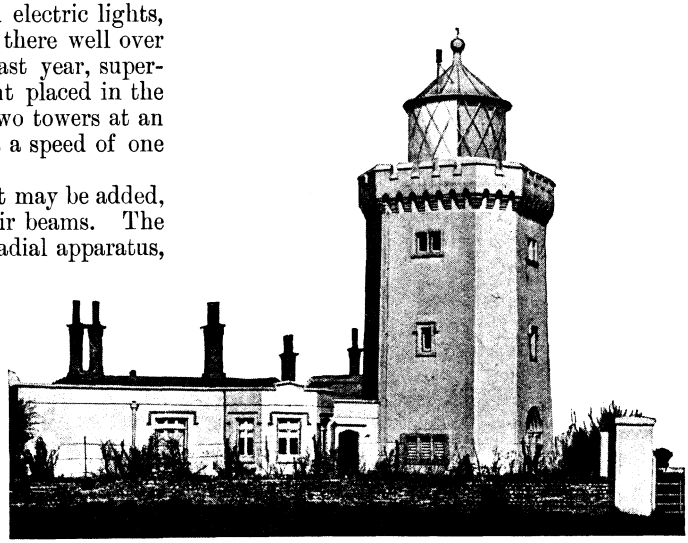
The St. Catherine's light was provided with a new optical apparatus only a few months ago. It formerly had a dioptric lens with sixteen sides, and exhibiting a single flash at intervals of thirty seconds. The new optic is four-sided, with a vertical angle of 139 degrees. Its flash is of wonderful intensity, and the reflection of the beacon in the sky can, in anything like clear weather, be seen from the Channel Islands. It is frequently the case, however, that the beacon reflection can be seen at a very much greater distance than the mere geographical range. The Black Head light on the Antrim coast, a light of a different order entirely, can be seen plainly at Portpatrick on the other side of the Irish Channel, and the Bailey light at the extremity of Howth Head can also be discerned for a long distance.

At the South Foreland, to which reference has been made, the two fixed electric lights, which have been in existence there well over twenty years, were, during last year, superseded by a single flashing light placed in the lantern of the higher of the two towers at an elevation of 374 feet. It has a speed of one revolution in forty seconds.

Lighthouses are classified, it may be added, according to the power of their beams. The largest of all have the hyper-radial apparatus, of which mention has previously been made. The hyper-radial lens has a focal distance of 1,330 millimetres—that is, a radius of about fifty-two inches. This light has been introduced within comparatively recent times, but before its day, lights were arranged in six "Orders," the "First Order" having a lantern twelve feet in diameter — the hyper-radial has fourteen—and a radius of 920 millimetres, or a little over three feet, while the "Sixth Order," with a lantern of only five feet diameter, had a radius of but 150 millimetres, or about six inches. The intervening "Orders" are lights of 700, 500, 250, and 187·5 millimetres respectively.

The page of diagrams illustrates in a simple fashion the difference in the radial gleam that is cast from a fixed light and a flashing light. In Fig. 1 a fixed light of 360° gives forth a starry brilliance which is steady but not penetrating. This kind of light may still be seen at the pierheads of ancient harbours, or in small lighthouses such as are found in the vicinity of many old-fashioned seaside resorts. Fig. 2 shows the effect of the same light, with a different angle, being defracted by the dioptric mirror; and Fig. 3 demonstrates the improvement effected by the introduction of flashing panels. These, as is shown with increasing number in the three subsequent figures, break—or, rather, gather up—the light into long, straight beams, distributed through the several panels, and falling according to the measured angle of the optic.

And now we have covered but the first principles and facts of lighthouse construction and methods of illumination. The romance and reality of the life and routine of the men who govern the beneficent work of these "pillars of fire" must remain to be told in another article.



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SOUTH FORELAND: UPPER LIGHT.

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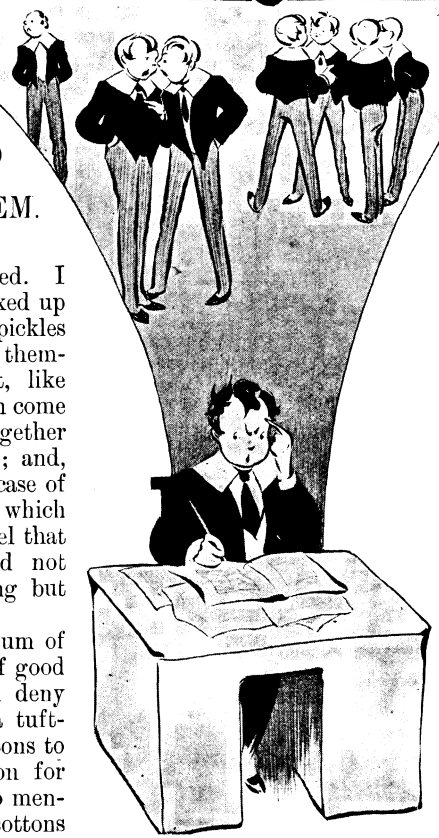
"Concerning Other Fellows"



By A Boy Who Observes Them.

MOST boys are mixed. I don't mean mixed up together, like pickles or biscuits; but mixed in themselves—streaky, in fact, like bacon. You very seldom come across a fellow who is altogether nice or altogether nasty; and, when you do, as in the case of Dowson (I'm not saying which altogether he is), you feel that he is an exception, and not much good for anything but to prove the rule.

Flapper is rather a chum of mine, and has no end of good points, but no one can deny that he is a snob and a tuft-hunter. He never cottons to anyone without a reason for it. It isn't necessary to mention the reason why he cottons to me. I make it a rule to cultivate modesty and to condemn brag. It will be sufficient, in order to illustrate my meaning, to speak of his relations with Camperdown.

Camperdown's people are as poor as rats, and on that account I thought rather well of Flapper for chumming with him. It seemed as if he was trying to overcome his disinclination to have anything to do with anybody out of whom nothing was to be got. But he made an explanation one day which showed I had been thinking too well of him. He told me that Camperdown has blue blood in his veins, and that was why he—Flapper—was ready to overlook the unpleasant facts that Camperdown's people had next to no money and lived in a small house. He seemed to think there was something creditable in this, and I might have thought so, too, if he had not told me immediately afterwards that his Aunt Maria had always advised him to look ahead when forming a friendship. She had pointed out to him that if a fellow had blue blood and brains (this sounds as if the brains had to be blue, too, but I don't mean it that way), he might go further than a cad with lots of money and no particular talent; and he said there could be no doubt that his Aunt Maria knew the world. He may be right about her; and she may be right about Camperdown; but so far as I am concerned myself, I don't think I like people who are always looking ahead.

Snobbery seems to run in the Flapper family. Something he told me about his eldest brother, who is at Eton, makes me think so. The first time Flapper major wrote home, he addressed his letter to "Lady Flapper"; and when his mother got it, she thought her precious Reginald was being overworked and getting softening of the brain, so she rushed off to pay a visit to Eton and find out what the matter was. The headmaster was too busy to be interviewed by Mrs. Flapper, which disappointed her a good deal; but she saw her dear Reggie, who was looking as well as could be expected after having eaten a dozen jam-puffs the day before, and she asked him at once what he meant by giving her a title.

"Oh!" he said, "I forgot to explain inside the letter. The fact is, nearly all the other fellows' letters were addressed to Lady somebody or other, and I didn't see why I should crawl in behind with a plain Mrs."

Flapper is very proud of his brother Reginald.

But, to turn away from snobbery, which is an unpleasant subject, and is very far from being the principal weakness to which boys are liable, I would remark on other kinds of streakiness. Desborough, for instance, is as

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straight as they make 'em in the schoolroom —wouldn't take an advantage over another chap, even if a master threw it in his way; but in the playing-field he's a regular crank. If you say he's out at cricket, when he must jolly well know himself that he is, he'll howl with rage rather than admit it; which is rotten.

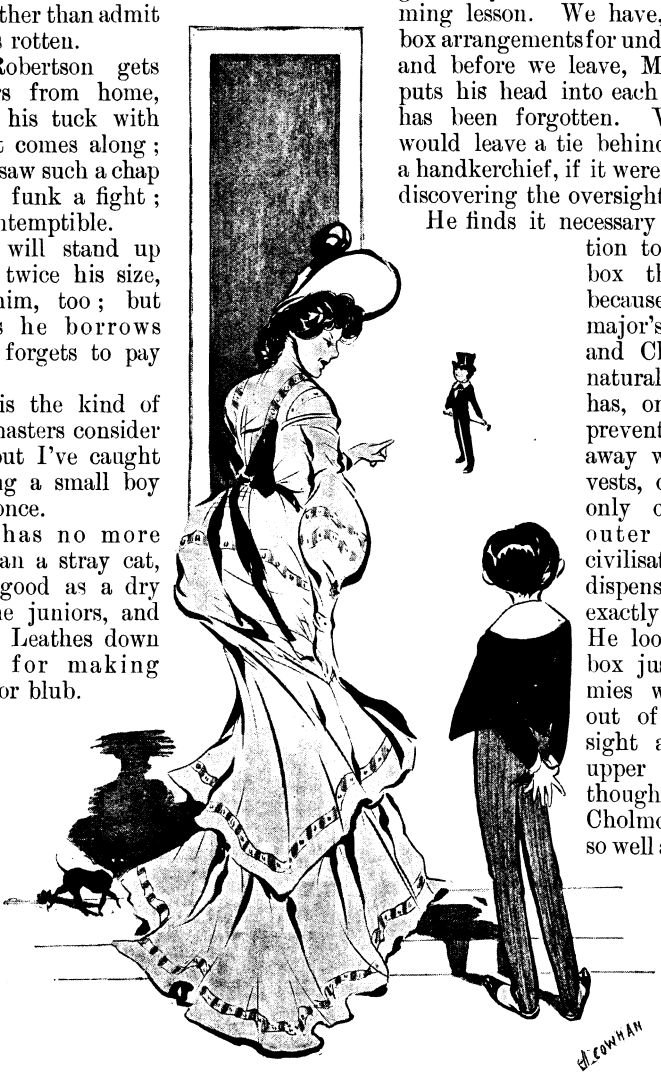
When Robertson gets his hampers from home, he'll share his tuck with anyone that comes along; but I never saw such a chap as he is to funk a fight; which is contemptible.

Crediton will stand up to a fellow twice his size, and lick him, too; but sometimes he borrows money and forgets to pay it back.

Leathes is the kind of chap that masters consider a model; but I've caught him bullying a small boy more than once.

Lovett has no more manners than a stray cat, but he's as good as a dry nurse to the juniors, and he knocked Leathes down last week for making Barton minor blub.

Cholmondeley minor's intentions are, as a rule, excellent; but his memory is so defective that it will not allow him to carry them out. Strange things have happened because of this, and still stranger things have very nearly happened. I should like to tell one of the latter, if I could depend on people not to let it go any further; and, even in spite of the risk, I think this incident is too instructive not to be recorded.



"His Aunt Maria always advised him to look ahead when forming a friendship."

The thing that nearly happened was Cholmondeley minor's walking through a populous district in a pair of light undergarments which are not usually considered sufficient to meet the needs of conventionality even in very warm weather.

In the summer term we are taken every Monday to the Gymnasium Baths, which are a good way from Everton House, for a swimming lesson. We have, of course, bathing-box arrangements for undressing and dressing; and before we leave, Mr. Carden generally puts his head into each to see that nothing has been forgotten. Very often a fellow would leave a tie behind, or a collar-stud, or a handkerchief, if it were not for Mr. Carden's discovering the oversight in time.

He finds it necessary to pay more attention to the Cholmondeleys' box than to any other, because of Cholmondeley major's natural untidiness and Cholmondeley minor's natural forgetfulness. He has, on various occasions, prevented them from coming away without collars, ties, vests, or even socks; but only once without those outer coverings which civilisation regards as indispensable. It happened exactly three weeks ago He looked into Chummy's box just as the two Chummies were going to walk out of it; and, catching sight at first of only the upper half of them, he thought he had never seen Cholmondeley minor look so well and carefully dressed. There was quite a finish about his appearance. He had neither crushed nor soiled his collar in taking it off and on, and his tie was perfectly straight; he had even gone so far as to cover his stud with it. Mr. Carden, who likes to encourage chaps, was just about to pay him a compliment, when his eyes fell, and he saw the other half of Cholmondeley minor.

Again Mr. Carden's eyes shifted; this time they were raised in horror, and they encountered, hanging on a peg in the box, Cholmondeley minor's braces, with Cholmondeley minor's trousers depending from them.

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I have often thought that much might be written on the disadvantages of clothes; but this subject is too wide to be treated at present, and must be reserved for a future essay.

To return to streakiness, Wainwright is the cleverest chap I know (bar one whom it would not become me to mention); but his love of punning leads people not intimate with him to mistake him for a fool. However, I think Wainwright's idiosyncrasies (fine word, that!) must also be reserved for future comment.

I could go on almost for ever multiplying instances (a grown-up chum tells me that's the right phrase), but I think I have said enough to prove the point of this essay, which is streakiness in character. I have talked it over with a person who is generally competent to give one good advice, and (which is better still) doesn't, as a rule, give it oftener than I want it; and what she says is that I ought to fix my attention on fellows' good streaks, which will probably lead to my copying them; and take as little notice as possible of their bad streaks, which I shan't be likely to imitate if I pay no attention to them. She says one should always be ready to appreciate the good and to make excuses for the bad—or, if we can't get so far as excuses, at least not to talk about them. But I'm afraid if I was as good as all that, I'd die young, like the disagreeably virtuous boys in the sort of books given to us by our godfathers and godmothers on our birthdays; and if that happened, the person who gives me reliable advice would be seriously annoyed by the effect of it.

On the whole, I prefer to be only moderately good, and to give myself a chance of continuing my observations on human nature to a ripe old age.

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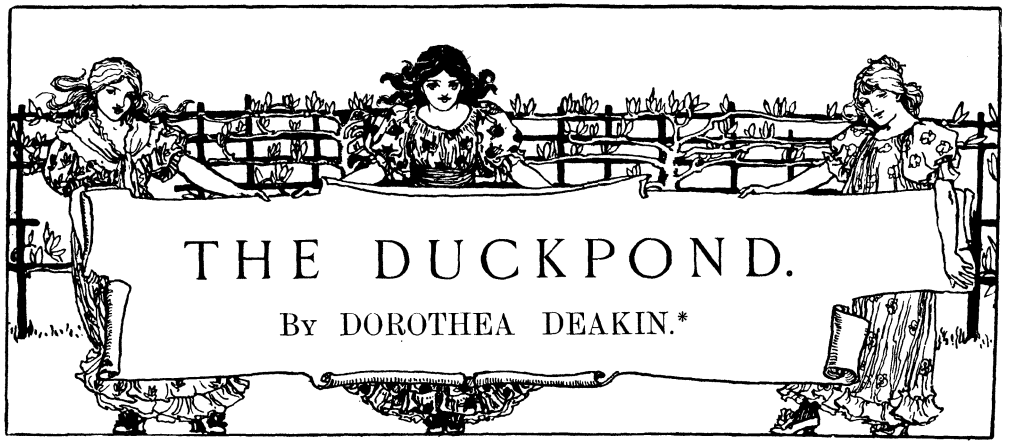
"When Robertson gets his hampers from home, he'll share his tuck with anyone."



THE DUCKPOND.

By DOROTHEA DEAKIN.*

I WENT downstairs very, very slowly, with Nancy's poor little letter clasped firmly in my trembling hand, to give me the courage I needed so sadly, and at each stair I repeated my desperate resolve aloud, to imprint it as firmly as possible on my mind.

"I *must* do it, because Nancy is my friend — Nancy is my friend — Nancy is my friend!"

By the time I reached the drawing-room door, the small, weak resolution I had been nursing had grown quite large and strong; but the first sight of Godfrey, when I saw him standing by the French windows, almost caused it to die a sudden and violent death. He must have noticed that I had been crying directly he looked at me, because his happy face turned quite grave as he crossed the room.

"Is anything the matter——?" he began. But I interrupted him quickly. I did not know what would become of the resolution if I listened to Godfrey's voice just then.

"I've got rather a headache," I said, trying to speak lightly. "I was out in the sun too long this morning, I think. Did you want to see mamma? She has taken the girls out in the dog-cart. Such a pity you have come while they are away; we might have had some tennis or croquet. Dorinda——"

"Miss Despard," Godfrey began gravely, "I hoped to find you alone this afternoon. I didn't come here for tennis. I thought you understood last night why I was coming to-day, but perhaps I didn't make my meaning plain enough. I hoped to find you alone, because—because I wanted to tell you something."

I roused myself with a start of horror and wrenched my hand away from him. Why had I allowed him to reach this point? This would never do! In another minute he would have——

I crossed the room hastily to the open window and stepped out on to the terrace.

"Don't stay in that close room!" I cried. "Come out into the fresh air—it will do my head good. And please don't talk seriously about anything—serious conversation gets on my nerves. What do you say?—you didn't know I had such feminine things as nerves? Oh, yes, I have! I have developed them quite lately."

"They came with the two o'clock post," I said grimly to myself.

"Come down to the duckpond and tease the swans!" I cried aloud. I felt that Godfrey was looking at me in puzzled surprise, but I dared not turn round to see if I were right. Instead, I ran down the steps and crossed the lawn, while he followed me obediently along the lilac-walk to the duckpond, and came close up to where I was leaning my elbows on the stone coping. Then I saw, by the determined way he had set his mouth, that he hadn't at all given up his point, and was going on at once where he had left off in the drawing-room, and I braced up my enfeebled resolution to fresh strength.

"Mary," he began; and I was horrified to find that he had broken down the frail barrier which still held between us of the more ceremonious "Miss Despard."

"Do go back to the house and get some bread for the cygnets," I said, moving quickly away from him and pretending an

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absorbed interest in the ugly Muscovy drake. "They do look so hungry, poor dears! Any of the servants will give it to you. You can go round to the kitchen yourself, if you like, and get it from cook. Please do!—they must be fed at once!"

Godfrey was silent for a few seconds. I suppose he didn't see any urgent need for haste; but I kept my back turned to him all the time, so I don't know whether he was looking at me or the swans. Anyway, he couldn't learn much from an untidy head of brown hair and the back of a pink frock, and at last I heard him move slowly away. Even then I dared not turn round, for fear that I should suddenly give up everything and call him back; but Nancy's pathetic note suddenly crackled in my hand to hold me to my purpose, and I kept perfectly still till he was out of hearing. Then I read the letter again.

"My Dearest Dear,—I am glad father gave Godfrey a letter of introduction to your people, because he must be very lonely up there in lodgings, poor boy, with only nasty landladies and stupid city people to talk to. I am glad for another reason as well, because now you will see for yourself that I simply can't help loving him. I know it is perfectly hopeless now, but perhaps he would have got to care for me in time if he had stayed, and if I had been the only one. But *all* the girls here are in love with him, and they all let him see that they are. It has spoiled him a little, I think; but, after all, *they* can't help it any more than I can, poor things! Good-bye, darling. Everything is miserable. The children quarrel more than ever, and my head always aches.—Your loving Nancy."

"All the girls are in love with him," I repeated scornfully. "I dare say! I don't wonder at that. But what idiots they must be to let him see it! As if that wasn't the way to ruin any man. No wonder he was glad to come away. But Nancy——"

And at the thought of Nancy my scorn melted away, and I leaned my elbows on the stone wall, to stare miserably at the green, slimy water where my cygnets and ducks dived and swam and quarrelled and preened themselves so happily. I remembered how I had first found a friend in Nancy, when I had gone to stay with my Calvinistic aunt in the bleak northern village, and my surprise at the sight of this girl blooming like a pretty garden flower in that wild and weedy crop of turbulent brothers and sisters. She was the eldest daughter of a poor, overworked doctor, and I had fallen in love with her there and then. I had never had a real girl-friend before. Dorinda said it was because I was too pretty; but, of course, that was all nonsense, and Dorinda is a little goose. She said that Nancy and I would never have taken such a fancy to each other if there had been any men in Northaven to come between us.

"No one ever shall come between us," I said with determination, "not even Godfrey. It won't be an easy thing to do, but I must do it. How blind he must be! There is no one in the world so pretty and so sweet and so dear as little Nancy. He must see how lovely she is. Why, her hair alone—— I wonder if he has ever seen it in the sun. He must know that there never was such a pair of blue eyes as hers. And her voice! Only to hear her sing is enough to love her. He must be deaf as well as blind."

Here my reflections came to a sudden stop, for a firm step crunched on the gravel path, and I knew that Godfrey was back again.

"Here is the bread," he said, with a pleasant laugh, as he came up. "And now that I have been so good and obedient, perhaps you will let me speak?"

"Were there any signs of tea?" I asked quickly, slipping the untidy note into my waist-ribbon. "I am dying for a cup of tea."

"They have just taken it out on to the terrace," he replied slowly. "But you aren't going——"

"Then let's go and have it," I said promptly.

"But the swans?" Godfrey's voice was full of surprise. "What are you going to do with all this bread?"

"Bother the swans! I will come out later on, when it is cooler, and feed them. It was very good of you to get it. Have the others come in?"

"Yes."

"Then let's go in. What are we waiting for?" I raised my elbows and lifted my eyes thoughtlessly to his face at the same instant, and was shocked to see how grave and displeased he looked. However, this was not a moment for sympathy, and each second the silence grew more dangerous, so I laughed outright at his gloomy face.

"Cheer up!" I said flippantly. "You look as if you had lost the most precious thing in the world."

He sighed, and I hated myself for the part I was playing.

"Perhaps I have," he answered quietly, and I couldn't go on after that. We went

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in without another word; and when he rose to go, after tea, he came up to where I was talking to Dorinda at the end of the terrace, and she left me with a smile.

"Mary," he said slowly, "I think you know what I have been trying to tell you, don't you?"

"Yes." I couldn't tell a lie to Godfrey at that moment. "I—I think I do."

"Do you want me to understand that you don't wish to hear it?"

"Ye—es——"

"You have been trying to make me see that the subject is unpleasant to you?"

"Yes."

After all, it was easy enough to sit there and answer "Yes" to a string of questions. I oughtn't to have minded it so much as I did. Would he never finish, I wondered—finish and go away?

"Thank you."

His voice sounded hard and cold all at once, and I looked up. He was holding his head very high, and for one second I was tempted to throw my friendship for Nancy to the winds and keep my lover. But only for a second, I am glad to say—certainly not longer.

"I have been making a mistake," he went on, "but I shall not annoy you again."

"I—am glad."

I crept upstairs after he had gone, flung myself down on the bed, and cried without stopping for nearly two hours; because—because I was so glad.

* * * * *

Godfrey stayed away for about a fortnight; then papa met him in town and asked him out to dinner, and he said he would come. I dare say he would rather have kept away—it would certainly have been more dignified—but I fancy the horsehair depression of his gloomy lodgings proved too much for him, and he found our house a pleasant change. I had failed him, but there were always Betty and Dorinda to make things pleasant; and as they were both engaged to be married, there was no further danger to poor Nancy from them.

I went up to my room that evening to dress, with my purpose strong in my mind, and I hurried through my wardrobe and drawers to find an unbecoming frock. It was difficult, because most things suited me in those days, and at last I went into Dorinda's room in despair.

"Dot," I said quickly, "have you got anything hopelessly ugly and unbecoming? Most of my clothes are pretty, and I look moderately nice in them all."

Dorinda was gazing out of her window with happy, absent eyes, thinking, no doubt, of her precious John, her brush idle in her hand; but at the imperious sound of my voice she turned round and laughed.

"Of course you do," she said. "You always will look pretty, Marykin, whatever you wear. What is the idea? Why do you want to look ugly to-night?"

"Lend me your blue muslin," I went on hastily, pretending that I had not heard her question—"the one that fits you so badly, I mean. I look hideous in blue—it makes me sallow."

Dorinda laughed again, but she was wise and asked no more questions.

"It is in the wardrobe," she said. "If you are going to give up the pomps and vanities of this wicked world and turn saint, Mary, you will have to do it in something more substantial and gloomy than blue muslin."

I brushed all the curl out of my hair with a wet brush and put on Dorinda's gown before I looked in the glass, which was, perhaps, a good thing, for when I did see my reflection, it was so appalling that a sudden temptation seized me to give up my idea of playing the martyr—to let things go on as usual, and leave Nancy to her fate; to abandon this cruel idea of laying my own heart as an offering at the shrine of friendship. But I didn't. I forced a picture into my mind's eye of the bleak little village up on the moors, and of a girl in a shabby frock standing at the door of a grey stone house, with tears in her eyes, as I had last seen her—lonely and miserable and tired, without any hope of happier days to come. I thought of Nancy and steeled my heart—but—I didn't look in the glass again.

I was not surprised that everybody cried out in horror when I went downstairs into the drawing-room, but I didn't really care much until I heard Godfrey's voice in the hall. When he came into the drawing-room, looking so big, and clean, and handsome, I felt as if I wanted to run into the corner and hide. He thought I was very pretty before, I know he did, and now for him to see me like this—it was terrible. I *didn't* run away and hide; I stayed where I was and shook hands with him in a very proper manner, and said feebly that the weather for the last few days had been almost unbearably hot, while all the time I knew he was asking himself what had become of his pretty, pleasant

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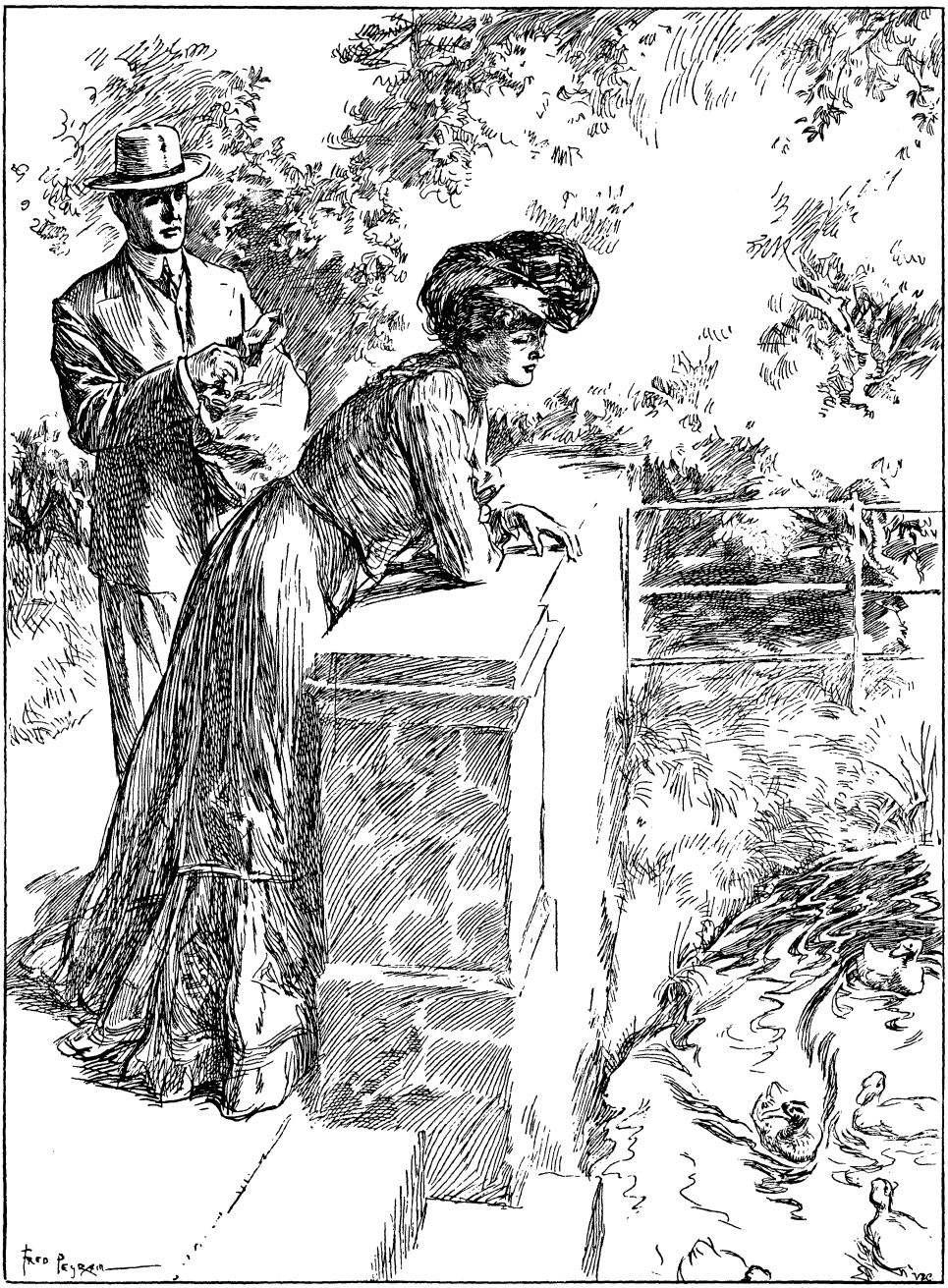

"'And now perhaps you will let me speak?'"

Mary, and "why the dickens she had made such a frightful mog of herself in that awful blue thing?"

It was, without exception, the most miserable evening I have ever spent. I sat in the corner and sulked, while Godfrey talked to mamma about cook and early chrysanthemums. I should never have thought that a blue gown and straight hair were all that were necessary to change me from a pretty girl into a plain and unattractive one, but my success was more complete than I

had dared to hope. Godfrey took no notice of me at all, and neither did anyone else.

"It isn't easy to be a true friend," I said to myself bitterly, as I dragged my hair viciously down when I went to bed. "I should think it was a good deal pleasanter to be an Early Christian and die at the stake. Nancy told me once that I didn't know what real love was. I think I am beginning to learn."

However, I was obliged to give up dressing unbecomingly, because papa flew into a temper and told me that he really wouldn't stand it, and that if I couldn't bring myself to wear decent clothes, I had better go into a sisterhood at once, and wear black serge for ever. And on the whole I was rather glad; I didn't want everybody to think me hideous, and I soon found plenty of other ways of making myself unattractive to Godfrey. I discovered that if there were one thing on earth which annoyed him more than another, it was sisterly advice, so I gave it to him constantly in a superior and infinitely aggravating tone. I lectured him on his late hours, and as the poor boy was generally in his rooms before eleven, this was a little hard. I preached to him every time he came, with his pernicious habit of cigarette-smoking as a text, and advised him to conquer his weakness and try a pipe, which I knew he loathed. I even had the impertinence to ask him to sign the pledge, and gave him a hideous bow of blue ribbon to take home with him. And at last, when I had worried him into a temper, I told him, in a voice which must have been most exasperating, that I was afraid tobacco had seriously affected his nerves and made him irritable. This finished him off. He flung the blue bow into the fireplace and banged out of the room in a towering rage, and I told myself that I had succeeded beyond my wildest dreams. I cried myself to sleep again that night over the completeness of my success.

At last, when I thought that he must be thoroughly disgusted with me, and that I must surely have cleared away all the crumbling remains of my own image from his heart, I began to lay foundation-stones for Nancy's—to talk to him sadly and regretfully of her lonely, unhappy life. How pretty she was, how loving and unselfish; and how overworked and worried with all those tiresome brothers and sisters.

"I only hope she will marry someone nice," I said one day. "She is sure to marry, of course—she is so charming; but I wish—I wish she didn't see so much of that wretched curate she talks about."

Until then Godfrey had not seemed to take much interest in the subject of Nancy, but at this he grew quite indignant.

"*That* beastly cad!" he said. "Good Heavens! what an awful idea! But surely Nancy wouldn't look at him?"

"You don't know," I said slowly, with a sudden agonising pain at my heart which was a revelation to me. Could I have hoped that my plan would fail? I certainly ought not to have minded Godfrey's very tardy rise to this bait I had so persistently and patiently dangled before him, and I pulled myself together.

"You don't know what a girl will do when she is lonely and unhappy," I went on. "But you do know how easy it is to please this poor child with a very little kindness and attention—don't you?"

"I suppose I do," said Godfrey gloomily, "though I never thought of it before."

Then I felt that the time was ripe for me to play my third card, and I sat down and wrote to my friend.

"DEAREST," I wrote—"I want you to do something for me. I want you to go into town the very first afternoon you can get away, and have a photograph taken by the best photographer in the place. Your people can't spare you to come and stay with me, so I must have the next best thing. Have it done in the pretty reddish colour, and wear your hair twisted low on your neck as I like to see it. I send a cheque to pay for it—please don't be angry—and a present of a little white frock which may be useful to you. Please accept it with my dearest love."

Then, as if it had been an afterthought—

"You might wear the frock when your likeness is taken, to show me how pretty you look in it."

Nancy was pleased with the letter, and still more pleased with the dress, as I had known she would be. In due time the photograph came. When I saw it, for some unknown reason I felt more miserable than ever.

"This ought to bring things to a climax," I told myself grimly. "Godfrey must be something more than a man if he can resist this."

It was Nancy in her happiest mood, with her large eyes wide with innocent surprise, and her pretty, tender mouth half opened to smile.

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"Flung myself down on the bed."

"I do love her," I said quickly. "I know I love her. Nancy is my friend—she shall always come first. If—if only it had been anybody but Godfrey — anybody in the world!"

But still my resolution was strong enough to carry me steadily on my martyr's path, and I put the photograph in the most conspicuous place in the drawing-room, so that when Godfrey came in, the same evening, it was the first thing to catch his eye. He took it up and carried it hastily over to the window in silence.

"Can it be Nancy?" he said at last. "Nancy!"

"Yes." I know my voice sounded harsh and unnatural, but he didn't notice it.

"I had no idea——" he went on, "I must have forgotten. How very pretty she is! Dear little Nancy!"

"Yes," I said slowly, feeling all the time as if my words would choke me, "Nancy is very pretty and—very dear."

"She is indeed," Godfrey said heartily; "she is charming."

"There — is — no one in the world so charming as Nancy."

I listened to my own voice in some apprehension, as if someone else had been speaking, and I was relieved to find, after all, that I had said the right thing. I told myself that I was glad Godfrey was too much engrossed in the picture to notice me.

"Will you give me this?" he said presently, still devouring it with his eyes. "I *should* like to have this."

"I am afraid I can't," I answered slowly. "I don't think it right to give away a girl's photograph without her permission. Besides, I want it myself. I am—very—fond—of Nancy."

"I don't wonder at that," he replied, lifting his eyes at last. "Do you think I might write and ask her for one?"

"I wouldn't," said I gravely. "You see—she might misconstrue your motive, mightn't she?"

Godfrey was silent.

"She might think," I went on, "that you—cared—— It might spoil the chance of—the curate, say, if Nancy got a letter like that from you."

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Godfrey looked at me quickly with a puzzled face.

"But I don't see——" he began.

"I can't tell you any more," I continued. "I am in Nancy's confidence, you see. She is my friend. But I think you will understand."

Godfrey said nothing for a long time, but he looked at the picture again. Then his face lit up with a sudden smile and he gazed absently out of the window.

"Perhaps you are right," he said at last; "perhaps you are right."

For the third time within a month I cried myself to sleep, and I was not surprised when the morning's post brought a note from Godfrey. It was short and very much to the point.

"I am going north," he said, "to forestall the curate, and I know that I carry your good wishes with me.

"Sincerely yours, GODFREY FORESTER."

"'Sincerely mine,'" I said bitterly, "a month ago, and to-day sincerely Nancy's. It is all over now, and it is my own doing. I have broken my own heart, and Nancy will never even know. She will never appreciate the sacrifice I have made, because I shall never be able to tell her. I ought to be glad; it is what I have been scheming for. But I didn't think he would go quite —so—soon. I didn't think he would be quite so easy to turn."

More tears, and the most unhappy morning I have ever spent. Then the two o'clock post brought me another letter—this time from Nancy herself.

"She can't have seen Godfrey yet; she little knows the happiness in store for her. She little knows what I have done for her sake. I have staked her happiness against my own heart," I went on tragically, "and I have won the game—for her."

But when I opened the letter, I gasped and cried aloud in pure wonder. What a girl! oh, what a girl! Nancy wrote to tell me that she was the happiest girl alive; that she was engaged to be married to the curate, and that for her he was the only man in the world.

"I can't have ever really cared for Godfrey," she wrote. "I think I must have fancied it because there was no one else."

Oh, Nancy, Nancy!

I laughed at first, it was all so very funny; and then I cried, because everything was so very, very sad.

"I seem to have been making a pretty fool of myself, and Godfrey, too," I cried; "and playing the martyr all to no purpose. I have made Godfrey loathe me, and driven him back to Nancy—who—doesn't want him. Never, never, as long as I live, will I meddle again in other people's love affairs."

I went out into the garden. What was the use of wandering about the house pretending sick headache and making everyone else uncomfortable? I would go out into the garden, down to the duckpond, where I had first begun to make Godfrey hate me, and have my cry out comfortably. Wearily, slowly, thoroughly sick at heart, I crossed the pleasant, sunny lawn and dragged my leaden feet down the lilac-walk to the pond. There was a flight of battered stone steps leading down to the water, and I sat down on the one next to the bottom and leaned my elbows on my knees, and my heavy head on my hands, and gave way to a fit of miserable sobbing. I was very, very sorry for myself.

"It's the last time I shall meddle with other people's business," I said again; "the very last time. For the future I shall consider my duty to myself first of all. I am the most unhappy girl in the world. Godfrey hates me, and I wish I was dead."

It was such a beautiful day, it seemed a great pity I was too wretched to appreciate it. The old swans and the cygnets glided backwards and forwards at my feet, and cried discordantly when they found that the usual crusts were not forthcoming; the silly little ducks paddled and dived, and splashed me with the green, unsavoury water; a happy lark was singing far above me in the cloudless, perfect blue of the sky; there was quite enough breeze to temper the July heat of the sun and disturb the duckpond to restless, sparkling ripples; there wasn't even an aimless gardener's boy with a wheelbarrow and a pretence of an errand to annoy me; and yet——

Nothing mattered now. I felt that I had reached the uttermost depth of misery and vain regret, and I told myself recklessly that if the waters of the pond had only been a little cleaner, I would have finished everything then and there.

At this point, perhaps, it was a good thing that I was roused from my gloomy reflections by a hasty step on the gravel. Someone was coming down the lilac-walk—the gardener's boy, no doubt. Why was he stopping at the top of the steps?

I looked round impatiently to see—no gardener's boy, but Godfrey!

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"'This is the fourth act,' he said."

My gaze returned silently to the silly, frivolous ducks, and I felt that this was indeed too much. No doubt he had come to beg my sympathy for his rejection. No doubt he thought I was the very person to soothe his bruised and battered heart.

"You are soon back," I said shortly.

"Yes." He came down the steps and seated himself beside me.

"Did you succeed in forestalling the curate?" I went on lightly.

"No."

"No? How was that?" picking up a tiny pebble and hitting the dignified father swan irreverently on the bill.

"I didn't go."

I turned quickly round and faced him.

"You didn't go? What on earth do you mean? Surely you can't have heard yet?"

Godfrey looked me straight in the eyes. He is the most honest-looking person I have ever seen, and his eyes are grey. I turned my attention to the ducks again.

"Listen to me, Mary," he said very solemnly, so solemnly that I was obedient and did listen in silence. "I didn't go to see Nancy," he began slowly, "because I wanted to be with someone else."

I didn't say anything, but all at once I grew suddenly and unreasonably very glad indeed.

"I fell in love with you the very first time I came to your house, Mary. And until a month ago, I thought you cared for me."

He waited for me to speak; but I couldn't think of anything to say, and he went on—

"Then all at once you began to behave in that strange, unkind way. I saw that you had utterly changed in your feelings to me, and I couldn't in the least understand why, until you began to talk to me about Nancy."

I stared at him in stupid amazement, and Godfrey smiled.

"When you began to sing Nancy's praises to me, from the moment I came in till the moment I went away, I wondered a little. Then, if you remember, you tried to make me jealous by talking of the curate."

"You *were* very angry." I found my tongue at last.

"Nancy was a dear little sister to me," he said simply. "Though," with a smile, "*she* never gave me sisterly advice. The curate was the first person to help me to see daylight.

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But I didn't really see what you were driving at till the photograph came."

"Yes," I said quickly, "you *did* like that photograph. You know you did."

Godfrey seemed very much amused.

"Of course I did. But I had one at my rooms just like it—Nancy sent it to me by the same post."

"Oh! Then you pretended——"

"Mary, do you think I am the kind of man to be bandied about from one girl to another?"

I didn't answer.

"How could you think I should be turned so easily over to Nancy, after once caring for you?"

Still I was silent. What a fool I had been!—oh, what a fool!

"At first I was angry. I thought you were tired of me and anxious to get rid of me, and so I played up to you and meant to punish you."

"Oh!"

"But the day Nancy's picture came, I found all at once the answer to the riddle. You showed me your real heart then, Mary."

I covered my burning cheeks with my hands, and still he went on talking.

"I saw then that you thought Nancy was fond of me, and that you were trying to turn me over to her, from a mistaken idea of loyalty to your friend."

Mistaken! How mistaken I knew now.

"Of course, it made me love you more than ever."

By this time Godfrey had taken possession of my hand, and I left it with him.

"Then," I asked slowly, "why did you write that hateful letter about forestalling the curate?"

Godfrey was still smiling heartlessly.

"Sheer devilment, I think. I was tired of playing in your comedy, Mary, and I thought a letter like that from me would bring this unpleasant third act to an effective climax."

"Comedy!" I murmured, with a sob. "It was no comedy. It was a tragedy we were playing, Godfrey. And what about the fourth act?"

Godfrey laughed again, and I was surprised to find myself suddenly crying—for pure joy now—against his grey flannel shoulder.

"This is the fourth act," he said.

THE PHYSICIAN.

THE lightning spark, the flowering field,
The chemic lore of every land—
All nature and all science yield
Their tribute to his healing hand.

These garnered wonders of the earth
He carries to each home of pain,
Where, through some spell of magic worth,
His gentle strength brings hope again.

And rooms of darkness grow to light,
And life beloved gains yet a span.
Hail him who stays the march of night,
God's present minister to man!

M. S. DE WOLFE HOWE.

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AYESHA

THE RETURN OF "SHE."

By H. RIDER HAGGARD.*

SYNOPSIS OF FOREGOING CHAPTERS.—The return of "She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed" is recorded by Ludwig Horace Holly, the friend of that Leo Vincey whom Ayesha the beautiful loved in the awful tombs of Kôr. When the record begins, the two men are living in an old house remote upon the seashore of Cumberland, where they have been slowly recovering from the horror of the passing of Ayesha in the flames—a doom that seemed one of complete extinction, yet was charged with the strange last words: "I die not. I shall come again and shall once more be beautiful. I swear it—it is true." On a sullen August night, Leo is thrilled by a vision of Ayesha in all her former loveliness. She beckons him, and in a vision his spirit follows her into a realm of snowy peaks far beyond the furthest borders of Thibet. A sign in the clouds at dawn is repeated from this vision to both Leo and Holly, and together they start for Central Asia. Sixteen years of toil, struggle, and strange adventure pass, and they are still searching for "a mountain peak shaped like the Symbol of Life." After many wanderings they find themselves in a country where no European has ever set foot, on one of the spurs of the vast Cherga mountains, far eastward from Turkestan. A perilous ascent into the unexplored mountain fastness leads them to the revelation of "the *crux ansata*, the Symbol of Life itself." Rescued from drowning by a beautiful woman and an aged man, they are conducted through "The Gate" into the kingdom and city of Kaloon. Their saviours, they learn, are the Khania or Queen of Kaloon, and a venerable physician of magical powers. Is this woman Ayesha? No; they conjecture her rather to be Amenartas, who wrote the "sherd" of the former chronicle. She falls in love with Leo, and he and Holly learn that her husband, the Khan, is a madman. Simbri, the magician, and Atene, the Khania, have already received a solemn charge from the "Hesea" of a "College" in the Mountain of Fire to receive two strangers and bring them safely to the Mountain. But Atene's love for Leo makes her detain the travellers awhile in Kaloon, and she even proposes that the Khan shall be murdered so that she can wed Leo. To this the Englishman replies: "I go to ask a certain question of the Oracle on yonder mountain peak. With your will or without it, I tell you that I go, and afterwards you can settle which is the stronger—the Khania of Kaloon or the Hesea of the House of Fire." The Khan himself assists the escape of the travellers for their further journey, but his jealousy has been aroused, and after they have set out on their journey to the fire-crowned Mountain he pursues them with his death-hounds. After a long chase, a few of the brutes, and the Khan, overtake them, and a terrible struggle ensues, in which Leo and Holly eventually prove the victors, and the Khan is slain. The Khania and Simbri overtake them and seek to persuade them to return, but they refuse. The Khania leaves them, saying: "We do not part thus easily. You have summoned me to the Mountain, and even to the Mountain I will follow you. Aye, and there I will meet its spirit. . . . I will match my strength and magic against hers, as it is decreed that I shall do." On the Mountain itself they meet again with Atene, who brings thither her dead husband to the burying-place of the rulers of Kaloon. From a priest, Oros, who goes with them, they learn that for thousands of years this Mountain has been the home of a peculiar fire-worship, of which the head hierophant is a woman. To the veiled figure of Hes, on her throne, the two Englishmen tell of their wandering search. In answer to the challenge of Atene, the Hesea shows them a vision of events which happened long ago in the Caves of Kôr. Picture succeeds picture until all is blank, and then she tells how Ayesha first met Kallikrates in the early ages. Suddenly she reveals herself as Ayesha; but to remove all doubt she unveils before them, revealing herself in all her withered age. Atene bids Leo choose between her and Ayesha. Leo then kneels down and kisses the wrinkled head. At which Atene says: "Thou hast chosen. Take now thy bride and let me hence." Ayesha then begins to pray aloud, to some unseen Power, for the return of her former loveliness, and suddenly she is transfigured into radiant beauty once again, and claims Leo for the man whom she loved of old. Atene is baffled in a sudden attack upon the mysterious creature's life. Then leading Leo and Holly through rock-hewn passages into a hall beyond, Ayesha bids them "Good-bye," saying: "Oros will guard you both, and lead you to me at the appointed time." After a long sleep they are led by Oros to the Sanctuary, where, before a white-robed company of priests and priestesses, Ayesha is seated as a queen on a throne. A ceremony of betrothal takes place, after which Ayesha bids them leave her alone awhile. Many hours pass before they are brought once more into the presence of Ayesha. Then, after recalling many incidents of the days gone by, Ayesha bids them "Seek to learn no more." But Leo takes leave to ask: "One thing I do still seek to learn. Ayesha, we were betrothed to-night. When wilt thou marry me?" "Not yet, not yet," she answers hurriedly. "I vow to thee that to-morrow we'll be happy—aye, to-morrow without fail."

CHAPTER XIX.

LEO AND THE LEOPARD.

DURING the weeks that followed these momentous days, often and often I wondered to myself whether a more truly wretched being had ever lived than the woman, or the spirit, whom we knew as She, Hes, and Ayesha. Whether in fact also, or in our imagination only, she had arisen from the ashes of her hideous age into the full bloom of perpetual life and beauty inconceivable.

These things at least were certain: Ayesha had achieved the secret of an existence so enduring that for all human purposes it might be called unending. Within certain limitations—such as her utter inability to foresee the future—undoubtedly also, she was endued with powers that can only be described as supernatural.

Her rule over the strange community amongst whom she lived was absolute; indeed, its members regarded her as a

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goddess, and as such she was worshipped. After marvellous adventures, the man who was her very life, I might almost say her soul, whose being was so mysteriously intertwined with hers, whom she loved also with the intensest human passion of which woman can be capable, had sought her out in this hidden corner of the world.

More, thrice he had proved his unalterable fidelity to her. First, by his rejection of the royal and beautiful, if undisciplined, Atene. Secondly, by clinging to Ayesha when she seemed to be repulsive to every natural sense. Thirdly, after that homage scene in the Sanctuary — though with her unutterable perfections before his eyes this did not appear to be so wonderful—by steadfastness in the face of her terrible avowal, true or false, that she had won her gifts and him through some dim, unholy pact with the Powers of Evil, in the fruits and consequences of which he must be involved as the price of her possession.

Yet Ayesha was miserable. Even in her lightest moods it was clear to me that those skeletons at the feast of which she had spoken were her continual companions. Indeed, when we were alone, she would acknowledge it in dark hints and veiled allegories or allusions. Crushed though her rival the Khania Atene might be, also she was still jealous of her.

Perhaps "afraid" would be a better word, for some instinct seemed to warn Ayesha that soon or late her hour would come to Atene again, and that then it would be her own turn to drink of the bitter waters of despair.

What troubled her more a thousandfold, however, were her fears for Leo. As may well be understood, to stand in his intimate relationship to this half-divine and marvellous being, and yet not to be allowed so much as to touch her lips, did not conduce to his physical or mental well-being, especially as he knew that the wall of separation must not be climbed for at least two years. Little wonder that Leo lost appetite, grew thin and pale, and could not sleep, or that he implored her continually to rescind her decree and marry him.

But on this point Ayesha was immovable. Instigated thereto by Leo, and I may add my own curiosity, when we were alone I questioned her again as to the reasons of this self-denying ordinance. All she would tell me, however, was that between them rose the barrier of Leo's mortality, and that until his physical being had been impregnated with the mysterious virtue of the Vapour of Life, it was not wise that she should take him as a husband.

I asked her why, seeing that though a long-lived one, she was still a woman, whereon her face assumed a calm but terrifying smile, and she answered—

"Art so sure, my Holly? Tell me, do your women wear such jewels as that set upon my brow?" and she pointed to the faint but lambent light which glowed about her forehead.

More, she began slowly to stroke her abundant hair, then her breast and body. Wherever her fingers passed, the mystic light was born, until in that darkened room—for the dusk was gathering—she shimmered from head to foot like the water of a phosphorescent sea—a being glorious yet fearful to behold. Then she waved her hand, and, save for the gentle radiance on her brow, became as she had been.

"Art so sure, my Holly?" Ayesha repeated. "Nay, shrink not; that flame will not burn thee. Mayhap thou didst but imagine it, as I have noted thou dost imagine many things; for surely no woman could clothe herself in light and live; nor has so much as the smell of fire passed upon my garments."

Then at length my patience was outworn, and I grew angry.

"I am sure of nothing, Ayesha," I answered, "except that thou wilt make us mad with all these tricks and changes. Say, art thou a spirit, then?"

"We are all spirits," she said reflectively, "and I, perhaps, more than some. Who can be certain?"

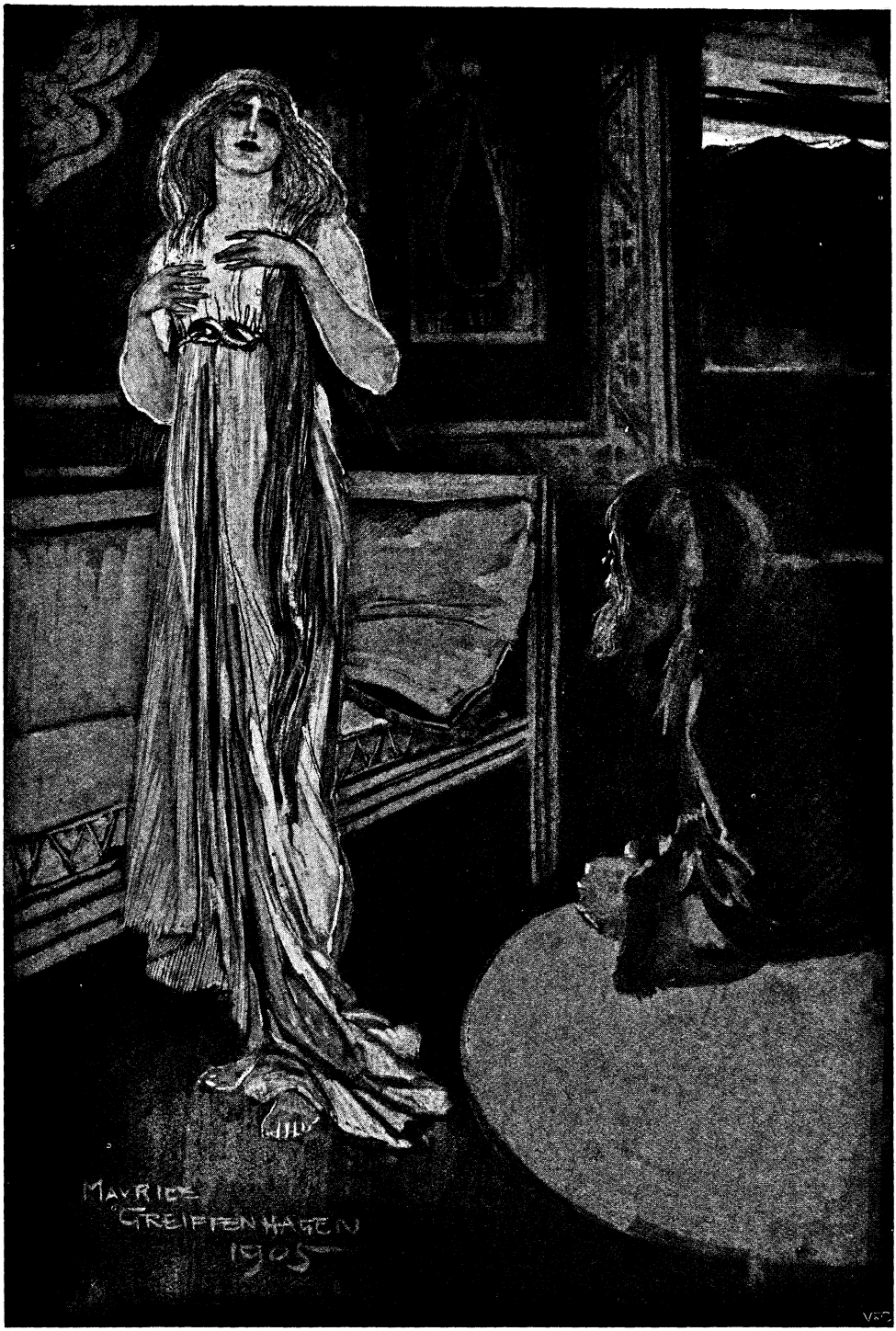
"Not I," I answered. "Yet I implore, woman or spirit, tell me one thing—tell me the truth. In the beginning, what wast thou to Leo, and what was he to thee?"

She looked at me very solemnly and answered—

"Does my memory deceive me, Holly, or is it written in the first book of the Law of the Hebrews, which once I used to study, that the sons of Heaven came down to the daughters of men, and found that they were fair?"

"It is so written," I answered.

"Then, Holly, might it not have chanced that once a daughter of Heaven came down to a man of earth and loved him well? Might it not chance that for this great sin she, who had befouled her immortal state for him, was doomed to suffer, till at length his love, purified by pain and faithful even to a memory, was permitted to redeem her?"



"In that darkened room she shimmered from head to foot like the water of a phosphorescent sea."

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Now at length I saw light, and sprang up eagerly, but in a cold voice she added—

"Nay, Holly, cease to question me, for there are things of which I can but speak to thee in figures and in parables, not to mock and bewilder thee, but because I must. Interpret them as thou wilt. Still, Atene thought me no mortal, since she told us that man and spirit may not mate; and there are matters in which I let her judgment weigh with me, as without doubt now, as in other lives, she and that old Shaman, her uncle, have wisdom—aye, and foresight. So bid my lord press me no more to wed him, for it gives me pain to say him nay—ah! thou knowest not how much.

"Moreover, I will declare myself to thee, old friend; whatever else I be, at least I am too womanly to listen to the pleadings of my best beloved and not myself be moved. See, I have set a curb upon desire, and drawn it until my heart bleeds; but if he pursues me with continual words and looks of burning love, who knoweth but that I shall kindle in his flame and throw the reins of reason to the winds?

"Oh, then together we might race adown our passions' steep; together dare the torrent that rages at its foot, and there, perchance, be whelmed or torn asunder! Nay, nay, another space of journeying, but a little space, and we reach the bridge my wisdom found, and cross it safely, and beyond for ever ride on at ease through the happy meadows of our love."

Then she was silent, nor would she speak more upon the matter. Also—and this was the worst of it—even now I was not sure that she told me the truth, or, at any rate, all of it, for to Ayesha's mind truth was many coloured as are the rays of light thrown from the different faces of a cut jewel. We never could be certain which shade of it she was pleased to present, who, whether by preference or of necessity, as she herself had said, spoke of such secrets in figures of speech and parables.

It is a fact that to this hour I do not know whether Ayesha was spirit or woman, or, as I suspect, a blend of both. I do not know the limits of her powers, or if that elaborate story of the beginning of her love for Leo was true—which personally I doubt—or but a fable, invented by her mind, and through it, as she had hinted, pictured on the flame for her own hidden purposes.

I do not know whether, when first we saw her on the Mountain, she was really old and hideous, or did but put on that shape in our eyes in order to test her lover. I do not know whether, as the priest Oros bore witness—which he may well have been bidden to do—her spirit passed into the body of the dead priestess of Hes, or whether, when she seemed to perish there so miserably, her body and her soul were wafted straightway from the caves of Kôr to this Central Asian peak.

I do not know why, as she was so powerful, she did not come to seek us, instead of leaving us to seek her through so many weary years, though I suggest that some superior force forbade her to do more than companion us unseen, watching our every act, reading our every thought, until at length we reached the predestined place and hour. Also, as will appear, there were other things of which this is not the time to speak, whereby I am still more tortured and perplexed.

In short, I know nothing, except that my existence has been intertangled with one of the great mysteries of the world; that the glorious being called Ayesha won the secret of life from whatever power holds it in its keeping; that she alleged—although of this, remember, we have no actual proof—such life was to be attained by bathing in a certain emanation, vapour, or essence; that she was possessed by a passion not easy to understand, but terrific in its force and immortal in its nature, concentrated upon one other being and one alone. That through this passion also some angry fate smote her again, again, and yet again, making of her countless days a burden, and leading the power and the wisdom which knew all, but could foreknow nothing, into abysses of anguish, suspense, and disappointment such as—Heaven be thanked!—we common men and women are not called upon to plumb.

For the rest, should human eyes ever fall upon it, each reader must form his own opinion of this history, its true interpretation and significance. These and the exact parts played by Atene and myself in its development, I hope to solve shortly, though not here.

* * * * *

Well, as I have said, the upshot of it all was that Ayesha was devoured with anxiety about Leo. Except in this matter of marriage, his every wish was satisfied, and, indeed, forestalled. Thus he was never again asked to share in any of the ceremonies of the Sanctuary, though, indeed, stripped of its rites and spiritual symbols, the religion of the College of Hes proved

pure and harmless enough. It was but a diluted version of the Osiris and Isis worship of old Egypt, from which it had been inherited, mixed with the Central Asian belief in the transmigration or reincarnation of souls and the possibility of drawing near to the ultimate Godhead by holiness of thought and life.

In fact, the Head Priestess and Oracle was only worshipped as a representative of the Divinity, while the temporal aims of the College in practice were confined to good works, although it is true that they still sighed for their lost authority over the country of Kaloon. Thus they had hospitals, and during the long and severe winters, when the Tribes of the Mountain slopes were often driven to the verge of starvation, gave liberally to the destitute from their stores of food.

Leo liked to be with Ayesha continually, so we spent each evening in her company, and much of the day also, until she found that this inactivity told upon him who for years had been accustomed to endure every rigour of climate in the open air. After this came home to her—although she was always haunted by terror lest any accident should befall him—Ayesha insisted upon his going out to kill the wild sheep and the ibex, which lived in numbers on the Mountain ridges, placing him in the charge of the chiefs and huntsmen of the Tribes, with whom thus he became well acquainted. In this exercise, however, I accompanied him but rarely, as, if used too much, my arm still gave me pain.

Once, indeed, such an accident did happen. I was seated in the garden with Ayesha and watching her. Her head rested on her hand, and she was looking with her wide eyes, across which the swift thoughts passed like clouds over a windy sky, or dreams through the mind of a sleeper—looking out vacantly towards the Mountain snows. Seen thus, her loveliness was inexpressible, amazing ; merely to gaze upon it was an intoxication. Contemplating it, I understood indeed that, like to that of the fabled Helen, this gift of hers alone—and it was but one of many—must have caused infinite sorrows had she ever been permitted to display it to the world. It would have driven humanity to madness : the men with longings and the women with jealousy and hate.

And yet in what did her surpassing beauty lie ? Ayesha's face and form were perfect, it is true ; but so are those of some other women. Not in these, then, did it live alone, but rather, I think, especially while what I may call her human moods were on her, in the soft mystery that dwelt upon her features and gathered and changed in her splendid eyes. Some such mystery may be seen, however faintly, on the faces of certain of the masterpieces of the Greek sculptors ; but Ayesha it clothed like an ever-present atmosphere, suggesting a glory that was not of earth, making her divine.

As I gazed at her and wondered thus, of a sudden she became terribly agitated, and, pointing to a shoulder of the Mountain miles and miles away, said—

"Look !"

I looked, but saw nothing except a sheet of distant snow.

"Blind fool ! canst thou not see that my lord is in danger of his life ?" she cried. "Nay, I forgot, thou hast no vision. Take it now from me and look again" ; and laying her hand, from which a strange, numbing current seemed to flow, upon my head, she muttered some swift words.

Instantly my eyes were opened, and, not upon the distant Mountain, but in the air before me as it were, I saw Leo rolling over and over at grips with a great snow-leopard, whilst the chief and huntsmen with him ran round and round, seeking an opportunity to pierce the savage brute with their spears and yet leave him unharmed.

Ayesha, rigid with terror, swayed to and fro at my side, till presently the end came, for I could see Leo drive his long knife into the bowels of the leopard, which at once grew limp, separated from him, and after a struggle or two in the bloodstained snow, lay still. Then he rose, laughing and pointing to his rent garments, whilst one of the huntsmen came forward and began to bandage some wounds in his hands and thigh with strips of linen torn from his under-robe.

The vision vanished suddenly as it had come, and I felt Ayesha leaning heavily upon my shoulder like any other frightened woman, and heard her gasp—

"That danger also has passed by, but how many are there to follow ? Oh, tormented heart ! how long canst thou endure ?"

Then her wrath flamed up against the chief and his huntsmen, and she summoned messengers and sent them out at speed with a litter and ointments, bidding them to bear back the lord Leo and to bring his companions to her very presence.

"Thou seest what days are mine, my Holly —aye, and have been these many years," she

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"I saw Leo rolling over and over at grips with a great snow-leopard."

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said; "but those hounds shall pay me for this agony!"

Nor would she suffer me to reason with her.

* * * * *

Four hours later, Leo returned, limping after the litter in which, instead of himself, for whom it was sent, lay a Mountain sheep and the skin of the snow-leopard, that he had placed there to save the huntsmen the labour of carrying them. Ayesha was waiting for him in the hall of her dwelling, and gliding to him—I cannot say she walked—overwhelmed him with mingled solicitude and reproaches. He listened awhile, then asked—

"How dost thou know anything of this matter? The leopard skin has not yet been brought to thee."

"I know because I saw," she answered. "The worst hurt was above thy knee; hast thou dressed it with the salve I sent?"

"Not I," he said. "But thou hast not left this Sanctuary; how didst thou see? By thy magic?"

"If thou wilt. At least I saw; and Holly also saw thee rolling in the snow with that fierce brute, while those curs ran round like scared children."

"I am weary of this magic," interrupted Leo crossly. "Cannot a man be left alone for an hour even with a leopard of the Mountain? As for those brave men——"

At this moment Oros entered and whispered something, bowing low.

"As for those 'brave men,' I will deal with them," said Ayesha with bitter emphasis, and covering herself—for she never appeared unveiled to the people of the Mountain—she swept from the place.

"Where has she gone, Horace?" asked Leo. "To one of her services in the Sanctuary?"

"I don't know," I answered; "but if so, I think it will be that chief's burial service."

"Will it?" he exclaimed, and instantly limped after her.

A minute or two later, I thought it wise to follow. In the Sanctuary a curious scene was in progress. Ayesha was seated in front of the statue. Before her, very much frightened, knelt a brawny, red-haired chieftain and five of his followers, who still carried their hunting-spears, while with folded arms and an exceedingly grim look upon his face, Leo, who, as I learned afterwards, had already interfered and been silenced, stood upon one side listening to what passed. At a little distance behind were a dozen or more of the Temple guards, men armed with swords and picked for their strength and stature.

Ayesha, in her sweetest voice, was questioning the men as to how the leopard, of which the skin lay before her, had come to attack Leo. The chief answered that they had tracked the brute to its lair between two rocks; that one of them had gone in and wounded it, whereon it sprang upon him and struck him down; that then the lord Leo had engaged it while the man escaped, and was also struck down, after which, rolling with it on the ground, he stabbed and slew the animal. That was all.

"No, not all," said Ayesha; "for you forget, cowards that you are, that, keeping yourselves in safety, you left my lord to the fury of this beast. Good. Drive them out on to the Mountain, there to perish also at the fangs of beasts, and make it known that he who gives them food or shelter dies!"

Offering no prayer for pity or excuse, the chief and his followers rose, bowed, and turned to go.

"Stay a moment, comrades," said Leo; "and, chief, give me your arm; my scratch grows stiff; I cannot walk fast. We will finish this hunt together."

"What doest thou? Art mad?" asked Ayesha.

"I know not whether I am mad," he answered, "but I know that thou art wicked and unjust. Look, now, than these hunters none braver ever breathed. That man"—and he pointed to the one whom the leopard had struck down—"took my place and went in before me because I ordered that we should attack the creature, and thus was felled. As thou seest all, thou mightest have seen this also. Then it sprang on me, and the rest of these, my friends, ran round waiting a chance to strike, which at first they could not do, unless they would have killed me with it, since I and the brute rolled over and over in the snow. As it was, one of them seized it with his bare hands: look at the teeth-marks on his arm. So if they are to perish on the Mountain, I, who am the man to blame, perish with them."

Now, while the hunters looked at him with fervent gratitude in their eyes, Ayesha thought a little, then said, cleverly enough—

"In truth, my lord Leo, had I known all the tale, well mightest thou have named me wicked and unjust; but I knew only what I saw, and out of their own mouths did I condemn them. My servants, my lord here has pleaded for you, and you are forgiven; more, he who rushed in upon the leopard,

and he who seized it with his hands, shall be rewarded and advanced. Go; but I warn you, if you suffer my lord to come into more danger, you shall not escape so easily again."

So they bowed and went, still blessing Leo with their eyes, since death by exposure on the Mountain snows was the most terrible form of punishment known to these people, and one only inflicted by the direct order of Hes upon murderers or other great criminals.

* * * * *

When we had left the Sanctuary, and were alone again in the hall, the storm that I had seen gathering upon Leo's face broke in earnest. Ayesha renewed her inquiries about his wounds, and wished to call Oros, the physician, to dress them, and as he refused this, offered to do so herself. He begged that she would leave his wounds alone, and then, his great beard bristling with wrath, asked her solemnly if he were a child in arms, a query so absurd that I could not help laughing.

Then he scolded her — yes, he scolded Ayesha! Wishing to know what she meant (1) by spying upon him with her magic, an evil gift that he had always disliked and mistrusted; (2) by condemning brave and excellent men, his good friends, to a death of fiendish cruelty upon such evidence—or, rather, out of temper, on no evidence at all; and (3) by giving him into charge of them, as though he were a little boy, and telling them that they would have to answer for it if he were hurt: he who, in his time, had killed every sort of big game known, and passed through some perils and encounters?

Thus he beat her with his words, and, wonderful to say, Ayesha, in this being more than woman, submitted to the chastisement meekly. Yet, had any other man dared to address her with roughness even, I doubt not that his speech and his life would have come to a swift and simultaneous end, for I knew that now, as of old, she could slay by the mere effort of her will. But she did not slay; she did not even threaten, only, as any other loving woman might have done, she began to cry. Yes, great tears gathered in those lovely eyes of hers, and, rolling one by one down her face, fell—for her head was bent humbly forward—like heavy raindrops on the marble floor.

At the sight of this touching evidence of her human, loving heart, all Leo's anger melted. Now it was he who grew penitent and prayed her pardon humbly. She gave him her hand in token of forgiveness, saying—

"Let others speak to me as they will" (sorry should I have been to try it!), "but from thee, Leo, I cannot bear harsh words. Oh, thou art cruel, cruel! In what have I offended? Can I help it if my spirit keeps its watch upon thee, as, indeed, though thou knewest it not, it has done ever since we parted yonder in the Place of Life? Can I help it if, like some mother who sees her little child at play upon a mountain's edge, my soul is torn with agony when I know thee to be in dangers that I am powerless to prevent or share? What are the lives of a few half-wild huntsmen, that I should let them weigh for a single breath against thy safety, seeing that if I slew these, others would be more careful of thee? Whereas if I slay them not, they or their fellows may even lead thee into perils that would bring about—thy *death!*" and she gasped with horror at the word.

"Listen, beloved," said Leo. "The life of the humblest of those men is of as much value to him as mine is to me, and thou hast no more right to kill him than thou hast to kill me. It is evil that, because thou carest for me, thou shouldst suffer thy love to draw thee into cruelty and crime. If thou art afraid for me, then clothe me with that immortality of thine, which, although I dread it somewhat, holding it a thing unholy, and, on this earth, not permitted by my Faith, I should still rejoice to inherit for thy dear sake, knowing that then we could never more be parted. Or if, as thou sayest, this as yet thou canst not do, then let us be wed, and take what fortune gives us. All men must die; but at least, before I die I shall have been happy with thee for a while—yes, if only for a single hour."

"Would that I dared!" Ayesha answered, with a little piteous motion of her hand. "Oh! urge me no more, Leo, lest that, at last, I should take the risk and lead thee down a dreadful road. Leo, hast thou never heard of the love which slays, or of the poison that may lurk in the cup of joy too perfect?"

Then, as though she feared herself, Ayesha turned from him and fled.

* * * * *

Thus this matter ended. In itself it was not a great one, for Leo's hurts were mere scratches, and the hunters, instead of being killed, were promoted to be members of his bodyguard. Yet it told us many things. For instance, that whenever she chose to do so, Ayesha had the power of perceiving all Leo's movements from afar, and even of

"'Drive them out on to the Mountain!'"

communicating her strength of mental vision to others, although to help him in any predicament she appeared to have no power, which, of course, accounted for the hideous and ever-present might of her anxiety.

Think what it would be to any one of us were we mysteriously acquainted with every open danger, every risk of sickness, every secret peril through which our best-beloved must pass! To see the rock trembling to its fall, and they loitering beneath it; to see them drink of water, and know it full of foulest poison; to see them embark upon a ship, and be aware that it was doomed to sink, but not to be able to warn them or to prevent them! Surely no mortal brain could endure such constant terrors, since hour by hour the arrows of death flit unseen and unheard past the breasts of each of us, till at length one finds its home there.

What, then, must Ayesha have suffered, watching with her spirit's eyes all the hair-

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breadth escapes of our journeyings? When, for instance, in the beginning she saw Leo at my house in Cumberland about to kill himself in his madness and despair, and by some mighty effort of her superhuman will, wrung from whatever Power it was that held her in its fearful thraldrom, the strength to hurl her soul across the world, and thereby in his sleep reveal to him the secret of the hiding-place where he would find her? Or—to take one more example out of many—when she saw him hanging by that slender thread of yak's-hide from the face of the waterfall of ice, and herself remained unable to save him, or even to look forward for a single moment and learn whether or no he was about to meet a hideous death, in which event she must live on alone until in some dim age he was born again?

Nor can her sorrows have ended with these more material fears, since others as piercing must have haunted her. Imagine, for instance, the agonies of her jealous heart when she knew her lover to be exposed to the temptations incident to his solitary existence, and more especially to those of her ancient rival Atene, who, by Ayesha's own account, had once been his wife. Imagine also her fears lest time and human change should do their natural work on him, so that, by degrees, the memory of her wisdom and her strength and the image of her loveliness faded from his thought, and with them his desire for her company; thus leaving her, who had endured so long, forgotten and alone at last!

Truly, the Power that limited our perceptions did so in purest mercy, for were it otherwise with us, our race would go mad and perish raving in its terrors.

Thus it would seem that Ayesha, great, tormented soul, thinking to win life and love eternal and most glorious, was in truth but another blind Pandora. From her stolen casket of beauty and superhuman power had leapt into her bosom, there to dwell unceasingly, a hundred torturing demons, of whose wings mere mortal kind do but feel the far-off, icy shadowing.

Yes; and that the parallel might be complete, Hope alone still lingered in that rifled chest.

CHAPTER XX.

AYESHA'S ALCHEMY.

It was shortly after this incident of the snow-leopard that one of these demon familiars of Ayesha's, her infinite ambition, made its formidable appearance. When we had dined with her in the evening, Ayesha's habit was to discuss plans for our mighty and unending future, that awful inheritance which she had promised to us.

Here I must explain, if I have not done so already, that she had graciously informed me that, notwithstanding my refusal in past years of such a priceless opportunity, I also was to be allowed to bathe my superannuated self in the vital fires, though in what guise I should emerge from them, like Herodotus when he treats of the mysteries of old Egypt, if she knew, she did not think it lawful to reveal.

Secretly I hoped that my outward man might change for the better, as the prospect of being fixed for ever in the shape of my present and somewhat unpleasing personality did not appeal to me as attractive. In truth, so far as I was concerned, the matter had an academic rather than an actual interest, such as we take in a fairy tale, since I did not believe that I should ever put on this kind of immortality. Nor, I may add, now as before, was I at all certain that I wished to do so.

These plans of Ayesha's were far-reaching and, indeed, terrific. Her acquaintance with the modern world, its political and social developments, was still strictly limited; for if she had the power to follow its growth and activities, certainly it was one of which she made no use. In practice her knowledge seemed to be confined to what she had gathered during the few brief talks which took place between us upon this subject in past time at Kôr. Now her thirst for information was insatiable, although it is true that ours was scarcely up to date, seeing that ever since we lost touch with the civilised peoples—namely, for the last fifteen years or so—we had been as much buried as she was herself.

Still, we were able to describe to her the condition of the nations and their affairs as they were at the period when we bade them farewell, and, more or less incorrectly, to draw maps of the various countries and their boundaries, over which she pondered long.

The Chinese were the people in whom she proved to be most interested, perhaps because she was acquainted with the Mongolian type and, like ourselves, understood a good many of their dialects. Also she had a motive for her studies, which one night she revealed to us in the most matter-of-fact fashion.

Those who have read the first part of her history, which I left in England to be

published, may remember that when we found her at Kôr, *She* horrified us by expressing a determination to possess herself of Great Britain, for the simple reason that we belonged to that country. Now, however, like her powers, her ideas had grown, for she purposed to make Leo the absolute monarch of the world. In vain did he assure her most earnestly that he desired no such empire. She merely laughed at him and said—

"If I arise amidst the Peoples, I must rule the Peoples, for how can I take a second place among mortal men? And thou, my Leo, rulest me; yes, mark the truth, thou art my master! Therefore it is plain that thou wilt be the master of this earth—aye, and perchance of others which do not yet appear, for of these also I know something, and, I think, can reach them if I will, though hitherto I have had no mind that way. My true life has not yet begun. Its little space within this world has been filled with thought and care for thee—in waiting till thou wast born again, and during these last years of separation, until thou didst return.

"But now a few more months, and the days of preparation past, endowed with energy eternal, with all the wisdom of the ages, and with a strength that can bend the mountains or turn the ocean from its bed, and we begin to be. Oh, how I sicken for that hour when first, like twin stars new to the firmament of heaven, we break in our immortal splendour upon the astonished sight of men! It will please me, I tell thee, Leo, it will please me to see Powers, Principalities, and Dominions, marshalled by their kings and governors, bow themselves before our thrones and humbly crave the liberty to do our will. At least," she added, "it will please me for a little time, until we seek higher things."

So she spoke, while the radiance upon her brow increased and spread itself, gleaming above her like a golden fan, and her slumbrous eyes took fire from it till, to my thought, they became glowing mirrors in which I saw pomp enthroned and suppliant peoples pass.

"And how," asked Leo, with something like a groan—for this vision of universal rule viewed from afar did not seem to charm him—"how, Ayesha, wilt thou bring these things about?"

"How, my Leo? Why, easily enough. For many nights I have listened to the wise discourses of our Holly here—at least, he thinks them wise, who still has so much to learn; and pored over his crooked maps, comparing them with those that are written in my memory, who of late have had no time for the study of such little matters. Also I have weighed and pondered your reports of the races of this world—their various follies, their futile struggling for wealth and small supremacies; and I have determined that it would be wise and kind to weld them to one whole, setting ourselves at the head of them to direct their destinies, and cause wars, sickness, and poverty to cease, so that these creatures of a little day" ("*ephemeridæ*" was the word she used) "may live happy from the cradle to the grave.

"Now, were it not because of thy strange shrinking from bloodshed, however politic and needful—for my Leo, as yet thou art no true philosopher—this were quickly done, since I can command a weapon which would crush their armouries and whelm their navies in the deed; yes, I, whom even the lightnings and Nature's elemental powers must obey. But thou shrinkest from the sight of death, and thou believest that Heaven would be displeased because I make myself—or am chosen—the instrument of Heaven. Well, so let it be, for thy will is mine, and therefore we will tread a gentler path."

"And how wilt thou persuade the kings of the earth to place their crowns upon thy head?" I asked, astonished.

"By causing their peoples to offer them to us," she answered suavely. "Oh! Holly, Holly, how narrow is thy mind, how strained the quality of thine imagination! Set its poor gates ajar, I pray, and bethink thee. When we appear among men, scattering gold to satisfy their want, clad in terrifying power, in dazzling beauty, and in immortality of days, will they not cry: 'Be ye our monarchs and rule over us'?"

"Perhaps," I answered dubiously; "but where wilt thou appear?"

She took a map of the Eastern Hemisphere which I had drawn, and, placing her finger upon Pekin, said—

"There is the place that shall be our home for some few centuries—say three, or five, or seven, should it take so long to shape this people to my liking and our purposes. I have chosen these Chinese because thou tellest me that their numbers are uncountable, that they are brave, subtle, and patient, and though now powerless because ill-ruled and untaught, able with their multitudes to flood the little Western nations. Therefore, among them we will begin our reign, and for some few ages be at rest while they learn wisdom from us, and thou, my Holly, makest

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their armies unconquerable and givest their land good government, wealth, peace, and a new religion."

What the new religion was to be I did not ask. It seemed unnecessary, since I was convinced that in practice it would prove a form of Ayesha-worship. Indeed, my mind was so occupied with conjectures, some of them quaint and absurd enough, as to what would happen at the first meeting between Ayesha and the Empress-Dowager of China —a lady of whose character and ambitions I had heard much in Thibet—that I forgot this subsidiary development of our future rule.

"And if the 'little Western nations' will not wait to be flooded?" suggested Leo. "If they combine with Russia, for instance —in whose territory we may be at this moment, for aught I know—and attack thee first?"

"Ah!" she said, with a flash of her eyes. "I have thought of it, and for my part hope that it will chance, since then thou canst not blame me if I put out my strength. Oh! then the East, that has slept so long, shall awake—shall awake, and upon battlefield after battlefield such as history cannot tell of, thou shalt see my flaming standards sweep on to victory. One by one thou shalt see the nations fall and perish, until at length I build thee a throne upon the hecatombs of their countless dead and crown thee emperor of a world regenerate in blood and fire!"

Leo, whom this new gospel of regeneration seemed to appal—who was, in fact, a hater of absolute monarchies, and somewhat republican in his views and sympathies—continued the argument, but I took no further heed. The thing was grotesque in its tremendous and fantastic absurdity; Ayesha's ambitions were such as no imperial-minded madman could conceive.

Yet—here came the rub—I had not the slightest doubt but that she was well able to put them into practice and carry them to some marvellous and awful conclusion. Why not? Death could not touch her; she had triumphed over death. Her beauty and her reckless will would compel the hosts of men to follow her. Her piercing intelligence would enable her to invent new weapons with which the most highly trained army could not possibly compete. Indeed, it might be as she said, and as I for one believed—with good reason, as it proved—that she held at her command the elemental forces of Nature, such as those that lie hid in electricity, which would give all living beings to her for a prey.

Ayesha was still woman enough to have worldly ambitions, and the most dread circumstance about her superhuman powers was that they appeared to be unrestrained by any responsibility to God or man. She was, as we might well imagine a fallen angel to be—if, indeed, as she herself once hinted and as Atene and the old Shaman believed, this were not her true place in creation. By only two things that I was able to discover could she be moved—her love for Leo, and, in a very small degree, her friendship for myself.

Yet her devouring passion for this one man, inexplicable in its endurance and intensity, would, I felt sure, even then, in the future as in the past, prove to be her heel of Achilles. When Ayesha was dipped in the waters of Dominion and Deathlessness, this human love left her heart mortal, that through it she might be rendered harmless as a child, who otherwise would have devastated the universe.

I was right.

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Whilst I was still indulging myself in these reflections, and hoping that Ayesha would not take the trouble to read them in my mind, I became aware that Oros was bowing to the earth before her.

"Thy business, priest?" she asked sharply; for when she was with Leo, Ayesha did not like to be disturbed.

"Hes, the spies are returned."

"Why didst thou send them out?" she asked indifferently. "What need have I of thy spies?"

"Hes, thou didst command me."

"Well, their report?"

"Hes, it is most grave. The people of Kaloon are desperate because of the drought which has caused their crops to fail, so that starvation stares them in the eyes, and this they lay to the charge of the strangers who came into their land and fled to thee. The Khania Atene also is mad with rage against thee and our holy College. Labouring night and day, she has gathered two great armies, one of forty, and one of twenty thousand men, and the latter of these she sends against the Mountain under the command of her uncle, Simbri the Shaman. In case it should be defeated, she purposes to remain with the second and greater army on the plains about Kaloon."

"Tidings indeed!" said Ayesha, with a scornful laugh. "Has her hate made this

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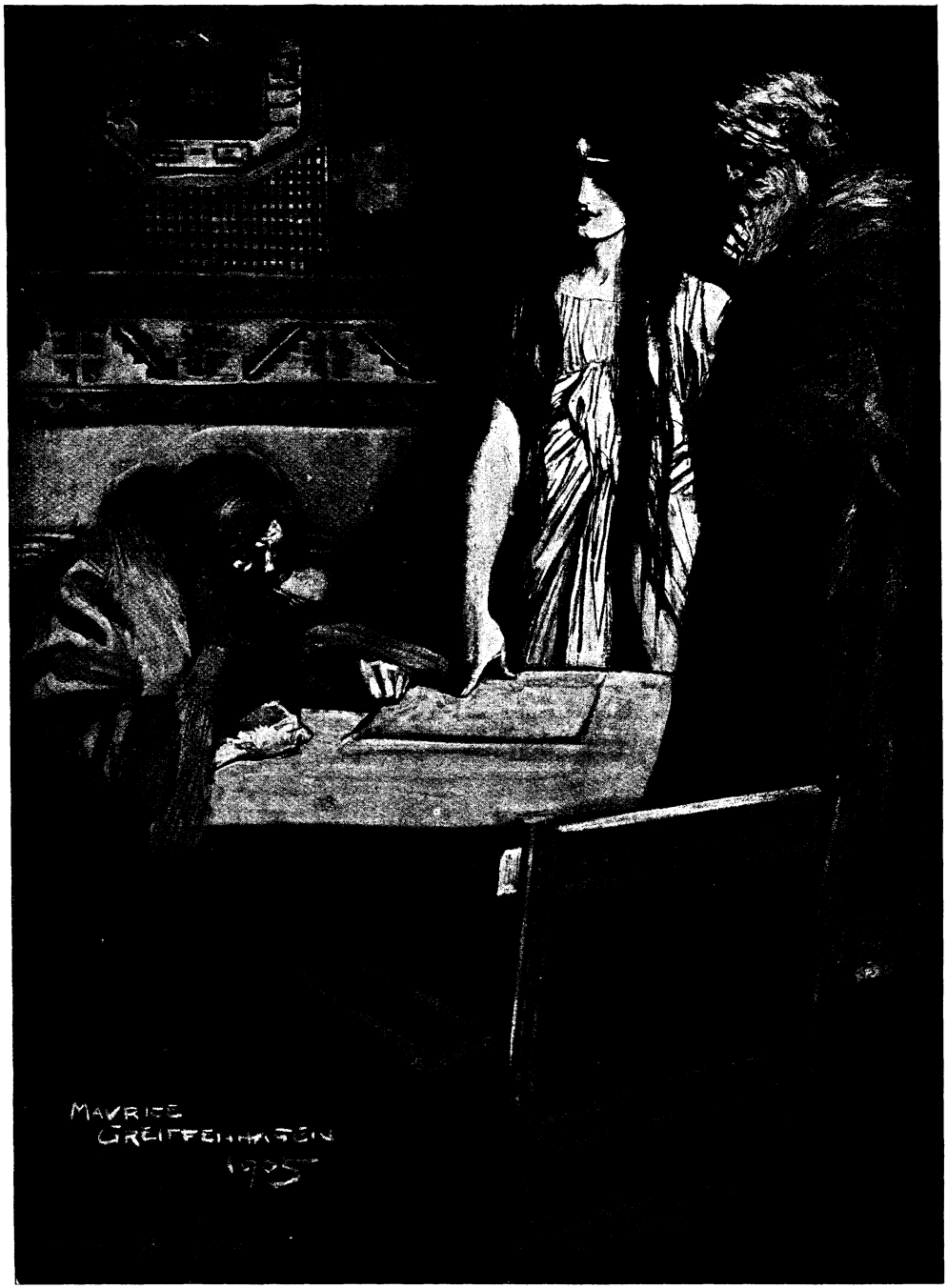

"She took a map, and, placing her finger upon Pekin, said: 'There is the place that shall be our home.'"

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woman mad, that she dares thus to match herself against me? My Holly, it crossed thy mind but now that it was I who am mad, boasting of what I have no power to perform. Well, within six days thou shalt learn—oh! verily thou shalt learn, and, though the issue be so very small, in such a fashion that thou wilt doubt no more for ever. Stay, I will look, though the effort of it wearies me, for those spies may be but victims to their own fears or to the falsehoods of Atene."

Then suddenly, as was common with her when thus Ayesha threw her sight afar, which, either from indolence, or because, as she said, it exhausted her, she did but rarely, her lovely face grew rigid like that of a person in a trance; the light faded from her brow, and the great pupils of her eyes contracted themselves and lost their colour.

In a little while, five minutes perhaps, she sighed like one awakening from a deep sleep, passed her hand across her forehead, and was as she had been, though somewhat languid, as though strength had left her.

"It is true enough," she said, "and soon I must be stirring, lest many of my people should be killed. My lord, wouldst thou see war? Nay, thou shalt bide here in safety whilst I go forward—to visit Atene as I promised."

"Where thou goest, I go," said Leo angrily, his face flushing to the roots of his hair with shame.

"I pray thee not, I pray thee not," she answered, yet without venturing to forbid him. "We will talk of it hereafter. Oros, away! Send round the Fire of Hes to every chief. Three nights hence at the moonrise bid the Tribes gather—nay, not all, twenty thousand of their best will be enough; the rest shall stay to guard the Mountain and this Sanctuary. Let them bring food with them for fifteen days. I join them at the following dawn. Go!"

He bowed and went, whereon, dismissing the matter from her mind, Ayesha began to question me again about the Chinese and their customs.

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It was in course of a somewhat similar conversation on the following night, of which, however, I forget the exact details, that a remark of Leo's led to another exhibition of Ayesha's marvellous powers.

Leo—who had been considering her plans for conquest, and again combating them as best he could, for they were entirely repugnant to his religious, social, and political views—said suddenly that, after all, they must break down, since they would involve the expenditure of sums of money so vast that even Ayesha herself would be unable to provide them by any known methods of taxation. She looked at him and laughed a little.

"Verily, Leo," she said, "to thee, yes; and to Holly here I must seem as some madcap girl blown to and fro by every wind of fancy, and building me a palace wherein to dwell out of dew and vapours, or from the substance of the sunset fires. Thinkest thou then that I would enter on this war—one woman against all the world"—and as she spoke her shape grew royal, and in her awful eyes there came a look that chilled my blood—"and make no preparation for its necessities? Why, since last we spoke upon this matter, foreseeing all, I have considered in my mind, and now thou shalt learn how, without cost to those we rule—and for that reason alone shall they love us dearly—I will glut the treasuries of the Empress of the Earth.

"Dost remember, Leo, how in Kôr I found but a single pleasure during all those weary ages—that of forcing my mother Nature one by one to yield me up her choicest secrets; I, who am a student of all things which are and of the forces that cause them to be born. Now follow me, both of you, and ye shall look on what mortal eyes have not yet beheld."

"What are we to see?" I asked doubtfully, having a lively recollection of Ayesha's powers as a chemist.

"That thou shalt learn, or shalt not learn if it pleases thee to stay behind. Come, Leo, my love, my love, and leave this wise philosopher first to find his riddle and next to guess it."

Then turning her back to me, she smiled on him so sweetly that, although really he was more loth to go than I, Leo would have followed her through a furnace door—as indeed, had he but known it, he was about to do.

So they started, and I accompanied them, since with Ayesha it was useless to indulge in any foolish pride or to make oneself a victim to consistency. Also I was anxious to see her new marvel, and did not care to rely for an account of it upon Leo's descriptive skill, which at its best was never more than moderate.

She took us down passages that we had not passed before, to a door which she signed to Leo to open. He obeyed, and from the cave within issued a flood of light.

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As we guessed at once, the place was her laboratory, for about it stood metal flasks and various strange-shaped instruments. Moreover, there was a furnace in it, one of the best conceivable, for it needed neither fuel nor stoking, whose fires, like those of the twisted columns in the Sanctuary, sprang from the womb of the volcano beneath our feet.

When we entered, two priests were at work there: one of them stirring a cauldron with an iron rod, and the other receiving its molten contents into a mould of clay. They stopped to salute Ayesha, but she bade them to continue their task, asking them if all went well.

"Very well, O Hes," they answered; and we passed through that cave and sundry doors and passages to a little chamber cut in the rock. There was no lamp or flame of fire in it, and yet the place was filled with a gentle light which seemed to flow from the opposing wall.

"What were those priests doing?" I said, more to break the silence than for any other reason.

"Why waste breath upon foolish questions?" she replied. "Are no metals smelted in thy country, O Holly? Now, hadst thou sought to know what I am doing—— But that, without seeing, thou wouldst not believe; so, Doubter, thou shalt see."

Then she pointed to and bade us don two strange garments that hung upon the wall, made of a material which seemed to be half-cloth and half-wood, and having head-pieces not unlike a diver's helmet.

So under her directions Leo helped me into mine, lacing it up behind, after which—or so I gathered from the sounds, for no light came through the helmet—she did the same service for him.

"I seem very much in the dark," I said presently; for now there was silence again, and beneath this extinguisher I felt alarmed and wished to be sure that I was not left alone.

"Aye, Holly," I heard Ayesha's mocking voice make answer, "in the dark, as thou wast ever—the thick dark of ignorance and unbelief. Well, now, as ever also, I will give thee light." As she spoke I heard something roll back; I suppose that it must have been a stone door.

Then, indeed, there was light; yes, even through the thicknesses of that prepared garment, such light as seemed to blind me. By it I saw that the wall opposite to us had opened and that we were, all three of us, on the threshold of another chamber. At the end of it stood something like a little altar of hard, black stone, and on this altar lay a mass of substance of the size of a child's head, but fashioned, I suppose from fantasy, to the oblong shape of a human eye.

Out of this eye there poured that blistering and intolerable light. It was shut round by thick, funnel-shaped screens of a material that looked like fire-brick, yet it pierced them as though they were but muslin. More, the rays thus directed upwards struck full upon a lump of metal held in place above them by a massive framework.

And what rays they were! If all the cut diamonds of the world were brought together and set beneath a mighty burning-glass, the light flashed from them would not have been a thousandth part so brilliant. They scorched my eyes and caused the skin of my face and limbs to smart, yet Ayesha stood there unshielded from them. Aye, she even went down the length of the room and, throwing back her veil, bent over them, as it seemed a woman of molten steel in whose body the bones were visible, and examined the mass that was supported by the hanging cradle.

"It is ready, and somewhat sooner than I thought," she said. Then, as though it were but a feather-weight, she lifted the lump in her bare hands and glided back with it to where we stood, laughing and saying—

"Tell me now, O thou well-read Holly, if thou hast ever heard of a better alchemist than this poor priestess of a forgotten faith?" And she thrust the glowing substance up almost to the mask that hid my face.

Then I turned and ran—or, rather, waddled, for in that gear I could not run—out of the chamber, until the rock wall beyond stayed me, and there, with my back towards her, thrust my helmeted head against it, for I felt as though red-hot bradawls had been plunged into my eyes. So I stood, while she laughed and mocked behind me, until at length I heard the door close, and the blessed darkness came like a gift from Heaven.

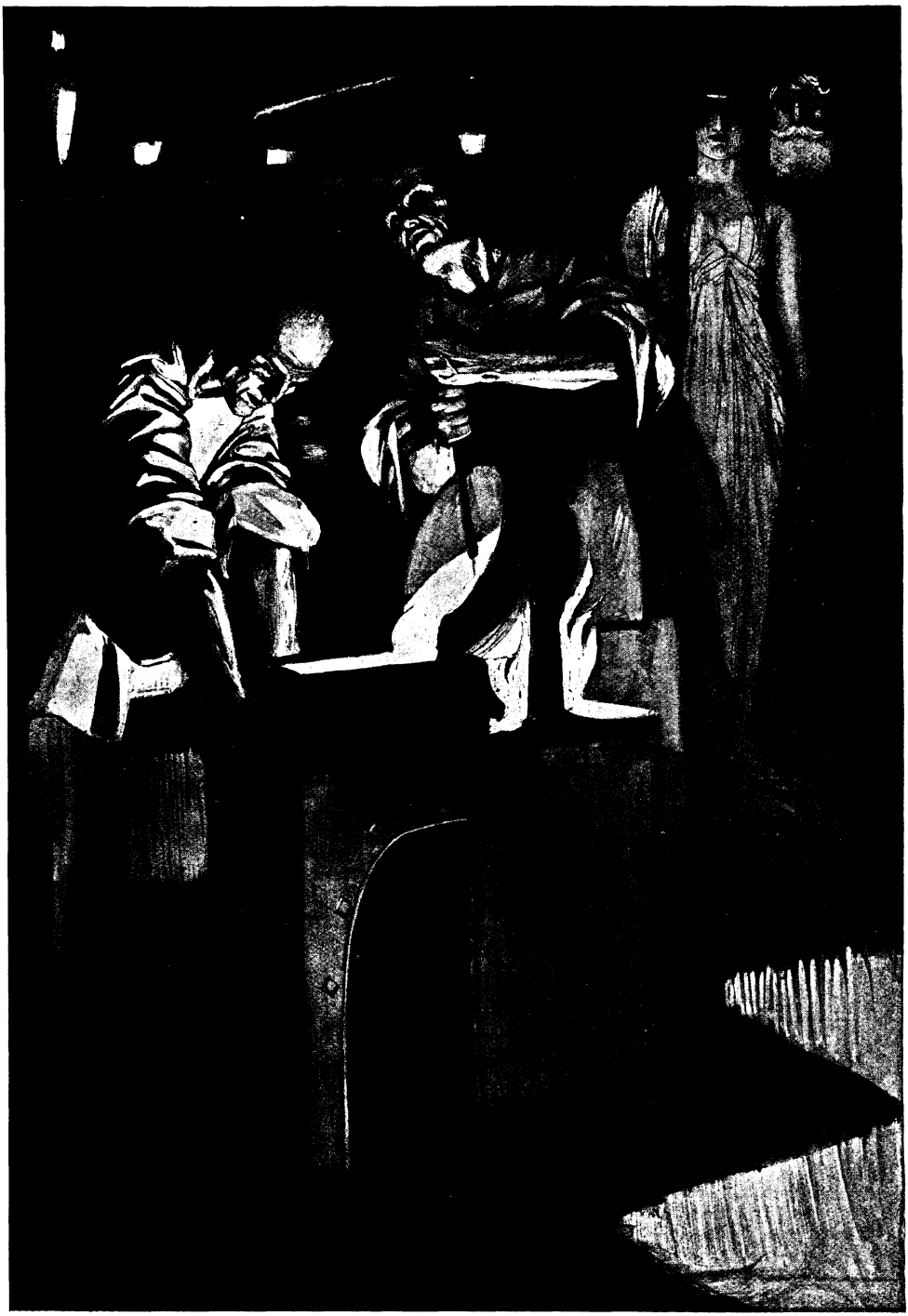
Then Ayesha began to loose Leo from his ray-proof armour—if so it can be called—and he in turn loosed me; and there in that gentle radiance we stood blinking at each other like owls in the sunlight, while the tears streamed down our faces.

"Well, art satisfied, my Holly?" she asked.

"Satisfied with what?" I answered angrily, for the smarting of my eyes was unbearable. "Yes, with burnings and bedevilments I am well satisfied."

"And I also," grumbled Leo, who was swearing softly but continuously to himself in the other corner of the place.

But Ayesha only laughed—oh! she laughed until she seemed the goddess of all merriment



"When we entered, two priests were at work there."

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come to earth; laughed till she also wept, then said—

"Why, what ingratitude is this? Thou, my Leo, didst wish to see the wonders that I work, and thou, O Holly, didst come unbidden after I bade thee stay behind, and now both of you are rude and angry—aye, and weeping like a child with a burnt finger. Here, take this," and she gave us some salve that stood upon a shelf, "and rub it on your eyes, and the smart will pass away."

So we did, and the pain went from them, though for hours afterwards mine remained red as blood.

"And what are these wonders?" I asked her presently. "If thou meanest that unbearable flame——"

"Nay, I mean what is born of the flame, as, in thine ignorance, thou dost call that mighty agent. Look, now"; and she pointed to the metallic lump she had brought with her, which, still gleaming faintly, lay upon the floor. "Nay, it has no heat. Thinkest thou that I would wish to burn my tender hands, and so make them unsightly? Touch it, Holly."

But I would not, who thought to myself that Ayesha might be well accustomed to the hottest fires, and feared her impish mischief. I looked, however, long and earnestly.

"Well, what is it, Holly?"

"Gold," I said; then corrected myself and added: "Copper," for the dull, red glow might have been that of either metal.

"Nay, nay," she answered; "it is gold, pure gold."

"The ore in this place must be rich," said Leo incredulously, for I would not speak any more.

"Yes, my Leo, the iron ore is rich."

"Iron ore?" And he looked at her.

"Surely," she answered, "for from what mine do men dig out gold in such great masses? Iron ore, beloved, that by my alchemy I change to gold, which soon shall serve us in our need."

Now Leo stared and I groaned, for I did not believe that it was gold, and still less that she could make that metal. Then, reading my thought, she grew very angry.

"By Nature's self!" she cried, "wert thou not my friend, Holly, the fool whom it pleases me to cherish, I would bind that right hand of thine in those secret rays till the very bones within it were turned to gold. Nay, why should I be vexed with thee, who art both blind and deaf? Yet thou *shalt* be persuaded"; and leaving us, she passed down the passages, called something to the priests who were labouring in the workshop, then returned to us.

Presently they followed her, carrying on a kind of stretcher between them an ingot of iron ore that seemed to be as much as they could lift.

"Now," she said, "how wilt thou that I mark this mass which, as thou must admit, is only iron? With the Sign of Life? Good"; and at her bidding the priests took cold-chisels and hammers and roughly cut upon its surface the symbol of the looped cross—the *Crux Ansata*.

"It is not enough," she said, when they had finished. "Holly, lend me that knife of thine; to-morrow I will return it to thee, and of more value."

So I drew my hunting-knife, an Indian-made thing, that had a handle of steel, and gave it her.

"Thou knowest the marks on it," and she pointed to various dents and to the maker's name upon the blade; for though the hilt was Indian work, the steel was of Sheffield manufacture.

I nodded. Then she bade the priests put on the ray-proof armour that we had discarded, and told us to go without the chamber and lie in the darkness of the passage with our faces against the floor.

This we did, and remained so until, a few minutes later, she called us again. We rose and returned into the chamber to find the priests, who had removed the protecting garments, gasping and rubbing the salve upon their eyes; to find also that the lump of iron ore and my knife were gone. Next she commanded them to place the block of gold-coloured metal upon their stretcher, and to bring it with them. They obeyed, and we noted that, although those priests were both of them strong men, they groaned beneath its weight.

"How came it," said Leo, "that thou, a woman, couldst carry what these men find so heavy?"

"It is one of the properties of that force which thou callest fire," she answered sweetly, "to make what has been exposed to it, if for a little while only, as light as thistle-down. Else how could I, who am so frail, have borne yonder block of gold?"

"Quite so! I understand now," answered Leo.

* * * * *

Well, that was the end of it. The lump of metal was hid away in a kind of rock pit, with an iron cover, and we returned to Ayesha's apartments.

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"So all wealth is thine, as well as all power," said Leo presently; for, remembering Ayesha's awful threat, I scarcely dared to open my mouth.

"It seems so," she answered wearily, "since centuries ago I discovered that great secret, though until ye came I had put it to no use. Holly here, after his common fashion, believes that this is magic; but I tell thee again that there is no magic, only knowledge which I have chanced to win."

"Of course," said Leo, "looked at in the right way—that is, in thy way—the thing is simple." I think he would have liked to add, "as lying," but as the phrase would have involved explanations, did not. "Yet, Ayesha," he went on, "hast thou thought that this discovery of thine will wreck the world?"

"Leo," she answered, "is there, then, nothing that I can do which will not wreck this world, for which thou hast such tender care, who shouldst keep all thy care—for me?"

I smiled, but, remembering in time, turned the smile into a frown at Leo; then, fearing lest that also might anger her, made my countenance as blank as possible.

"If so," she continued, "well, let the world be wrecked. But what meanest thou? Oh, my lord Leo, forgive me if I am so dull that I cannot always follow thy quick thought—I who have lived these many years alone, without converse with nobler minds, or even those to which mine own is equal."

"It pleases thee to mock me," said Leo in a vexed voice, "and that is not too brave."

Now Ayesha turned on him fiercely, and I looked towards the door. But he did not shrink, only folded his arms and stared her straight in the face. She contemplated him a little, then said—

"After that great ordained reason which thou dost not know, I think, Leo, that why I love thee so madly is that thou alone art not afraid of me. Not like Holly there, who, ever since I threatened to turn his bones to gold—which, indeed, I was minded to do," and she laughed—"trembles at my footsteps and cowers beneath my softest glance.

"Oh, my lord, how good thou art to me! how patient with my moods and woman's weaknesses!" and she made as though she were about to embrace him. Then suddenly remembering herself, with a little start that somehow conveyed more than the most tragic gesture, she pointed to the couch in token that he should seat himself. When he had done so, she drew a footstool to his feet and sank upon it, looking up into his face with attentive eyes, like a child who listens for a story.

"Thy reasons, Leo—give me thy reasons. Doubtless they are good, and, oh! be sure I'll weigh them well."

"Here they are in brief," he answered. "The world—as thou knewest in thy——" And he stopped.

"Thy earlier wanderings there," she suggested.

"Yes, thy earlier wanderings there—has set up gold as the standard of its wealth. On it all civilisations are founded. Make it as common as it seems thou canst, and these must fall to pieces. Credit will fail and, like their savage forefathers, men must once more take to barter to supply their needs, as they do in Kaloon to-day."

"Why not?" she asked. "It would be more simple and bring them closer to the time when they were good and knew not luxury and greed."

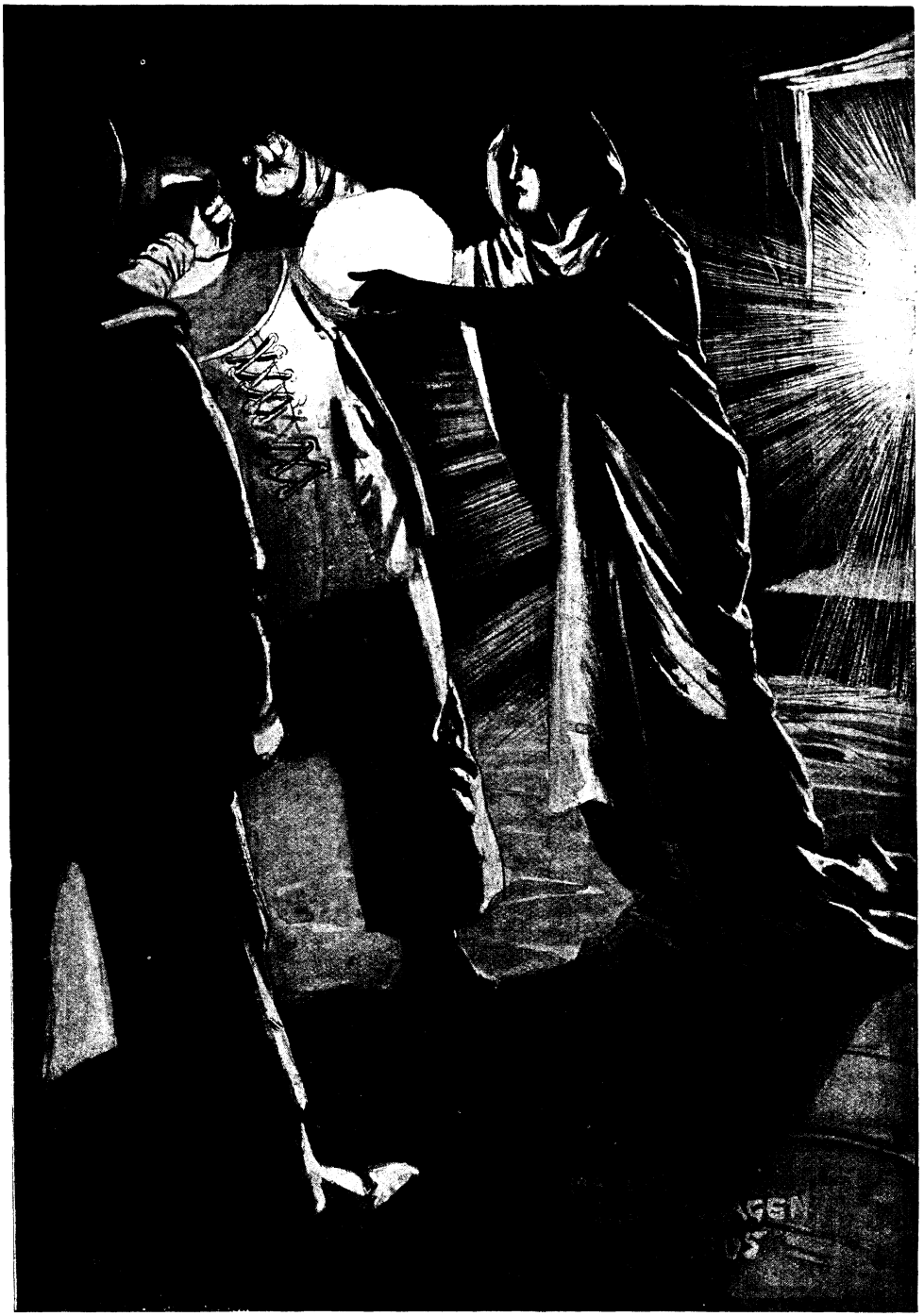
"And smashed in each other's heads with stone axes," added Leo.

"Who now pierce each other's hearts with steel, or those leaden missiles of which thou hast told me. Oh, Leo! when the nations are beggared and their golden god is down; when the usurer and the fat merchant tremble and turn white as chalk because their hoards are but useless dross; when I have made the bankrupt Exchanges of the world my mock, and laugh across the ruin of its richest markets, why, then, will not true worth come to its heritage again?

"What of it if I do discomfort those who think more of pelf than of courage and of virtue; those who, as that Hebrew prophet wrote, lay field to field and house to house, until the wretched whom they have robbed find no place left whereon to dwell? What if I prove your sagest chapmen fools, and gorge your greedy money-changers with the gold that they desire until they loathe its very sight and touch? What if I uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed against the ravening lusts of Mammon? Why, will not this world of yours be happier then?"

"I do not know," answered Leo. "All that I know is that it would be a different world, one shaped upon a new plan, governed by untried laws, and seeking other ends. In so strange a place, who can say what might or might not chance?"

"That we shall learn in its season, Leo. Or, rather, if it be against thy wish, we will not turn this hidden page. Since thou dost desire it, that old evil, the love of lucre, shall still hold its mastery upon the earth. Let the peoples keep their yellow king; I'll not crown another in his place, as I was minded



"She thrust the glowing substance up almost to the mask that hid my face."

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—such as that living Strength thou sawest burning eternally but now; that Power whereof I am the mistress, which can give health to men, or even change the character of metals, and in truth, if I so desire, obedient to my word, destroy a city or rend this Mountain from its roots.

"But see, Holly is wearied with much wondering and needs his rest. Oh, Holly! thou wast born a critic of things done, not a doer of them. I know thy tribe, for even in my day the colleges of Alexandria echoed with their wranglings, and already the winds blew thick with the dust of their forgotten bones. Holly, I tell thee that at times those who create and act are impatient of such petty doubts and cavillings. Yet fear not, old friend, nor take my anger ill. Already thy heart is gold without alloy, so what need have I to gild thy bones?"

I thanked Ayesha for her compliment, and went to my bed wondering which was real, her kindness or her wrath, or if both were but assumed. Also I wondered in what way she had fallen foul of the critics of Alexandria. Perhaps once she had published a poem or a system of philosophy and been roughly handled by them! It is quite possible, only if Ayesha had ever written poetry, I think that it would have endured, like Sappho's.

In the morning I discovered that whatever else about her might be false, Ayesha was a true chemist—the very greatest, I suppose, who ever lived. For as I dressed myself, those priests whom we had seen in the laboratory staggered into the room, carrying between them a heavy burden, that was covered with a cloth, and, directed by Oros, placed it upon the floor.

"What is that?" I asked of Oros.

"A peace-offering sent by the Hesea," he said, "with whom, as I am told, you dared to quarrel yesterday."

Then he withdrew the cloth, and there beneath it shone that great lump of metal which, in the presence of myself and Leo, had been marked with the Symbol of Life, that still appeared upon its surface. Only now it was gold, not iron—gold so good and soft that I could write my name upon it with a nail. My knife lay with it also, and of that, too, the handle, though not the blade, had been changed from steel to gold.

Ayesha asked to see this afterwards, and was but ill-pleased with the result of her experiment. She pointed out to me that lines and blotches of gold ran for an inch or more down the substance of the steel, which she feared that they might weaken or distemper, whereas it had been her purpose that the hilt only should be altered.*

Often since that time I have marvelled how Ayesha performed this miracle, and from what substances she gathered or compounded the lightning-like material which was her servant in the work; also, whether or no it had been impregnated with the immortalising fire of Life that burned in the caves of Kôr.† Yet to this hour I have found no answer to the problem, for it is beyond my guessing.

I suppose that, in preparation for her conquest of the inhabitants of this globe—to which, indeed, it would have sufficed unaided by any other power—the manufacture of gold from iron went on in the cave unceasingly.

However this may be, during the few days that we remained together, Ayesha never so much as spoke of it again. It seemed to have served her purpose for the while, or, in the press of other and more urgent matters, to have been forgotten or thrust from her mind. Still, amongst others, whereof I have said nothing, since it is necessary to select, I record this strange incident, and our conversations concerning it at length, for the reason that it made a great impression upon me, and furnishes a striking example of Ayesha's dominion over the hidden forces of Nature.

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* I proved in after days how real were Ayesha's alchemy and the knowledge which enabled her to solve the secret that chemists have hunted for in vain, and, like Nature's self, to transmute the commonest into the most precious of the metals. At the first town that I reached on the frontiers of India, I took this knife to a jeweller, a native, who was as clever as he proved dishonest, and asked him to test the handle. He did so with acids and by other means, and told me that it was of very pure gold—twenty-four carats, I think he said. Also he pointed out that this gold became gradually merged into the steel of the blade in a way which was quite inexplicable to him, and asked me to clear up the matter. Of course I could not, but at his request I left the knife in his shop, to give him an opportunity of examining it further. The next day I was taken ill with one of the heart attacks to which I have been liable of late, and when I became able to move about again a while afterwards, I found that this jeweller had gone, none knew whither. So had my knife.—L. H. H.

† Recent discoveries would apppear to suggest that this mysterious "Fire of Life," which, whatever else it may have been, was evidently a force and no true fire, since it did not burn, owed its origin to the emanations from radium, or some kindred substance. Although in the year 1885, Mr. Holly would have known nothing of the properties of these marvellous rays or emanations, doubtless Ayesha was familiar with them and their enormous possibilities, of which our chemists and scientific men have, at present, but explored the fringe.—H. R. H.

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(To be continued.)

THE FRENCH MAID.

By JUSTUS MILES FORMAN,*

Author of "The Garden of Lies."

"WELL, I call that very nasty of you," said Peter, "and very unfeeling, too. That engagement was made a week ago. What do you think I'm going to do, anyhow? Paddle a canoe five miles *alone*, when I'd expected to have you sitting in the bow under a red sunshade? Not I, by Jove! I won't go to your picnic thing at all."

"Yes, you will, too," said the girl very positively; "so don't be silly. It's good for you to be disappointed now and then—humbles you, sort of. Besides, what else can I do? If 'is Grice, 'ere, *will* come down when he isn't expected, I've got to be civil to him, haven't I, Alexander?"

"Quite so, quite so!" said Alexander. He was a duke, but a very proper one. No side.

"That's a jolly poor excuse," said Peter. "I'm not pleased with you. And as for Alexander," he continued rudely, "words can't express my contempt for Alexander. I always disliked him."

Alexander grinned unhappily and pulled his moustache.

"Oh, cheer up!" said Miss Aberthenay. "Behind the clouds the sun is shining. Lulu de Vignot is coming to-morrow."

"Ah!" said Peter.

"To-morrow?" cried Alexander. "Why, I thought——"

"Well, you're not to think," interrupted the girl. "You came here for a rest. Lulu will be here to-morrow, as I said. Now, Peter, dear, come to the picnic thing like an angel. We shall be five canoes. That's nine. And mother and the governor and the Vintons are to drive over, so that's fourteen."

"I won't," said Peter. "My feelings are hurt. Besides, I hate picnics. You sit on the damp grass and get stained green, and you eat *paté de Strasbourg* and ants, and drink ants and warm champagne. I won't come. By Jove! who's that?"

An apparition in white and pink fluffy things under a big hat had sauntered out from the further wing of the house towards the lake. Miss Aberthenay dug a cruel elbow into the exclamatory Alexander, and she appeared to be struggling with some emotion.

"That?" she said at last. "Oh, that's Marianne, my maid. I gave her a holiday because we're to be gone till evening. Pretty, isn't she?"

"Pretty?" said Peter, looking after the apparition in pink and white; "pretty!"

"You might bring Marianne to the picnic," suggested Miss Aberthenay kindly. "I dare say she'd be delighted. Oh, here are the others! Don't forget those pillows, Alexander. Come along. And Peter, angel, *do* be sensible!"

Peter followed the party to the boat-landing and squatted, a morose and unkindly critic, on the edge of the steep bank. He had one moment of unalloyed pleasure when Alexander, who was not athletic, got his first glimpse of the canoe which he was to propel the distance of five miles. It was the pride of Miss Aberthenay's heart, an Indian-built atrocity of birch bark, wide, hog-bellied, and crank. It was humorously named *Minnehaha*, and bore over its prow an ornate cluster of eagle plumes.

"Good Heavens!" cried the outraged Alexander. "Have I got to paddle that? It's a bally hearse! I say, is the lake deep, you know? Couldn't I punt the thing with a setting-pole?"

"Swim with it, Alexander!" advised Peter gloomily from the top of the bank. "Take the painter in your teeth and swim with it."

Alexander turned an appealing countenance.

"I say," he coaxed, "you couldn't lend me your canoe? If you're not coming, you know? It's such a jolly neat one!"

"No, I couldn't," said Peter firmly; "I couldn't think of it. Good-bye, Alexander, and God be with you!"

"You're a beast, Peter!" cried Miss Aberthenay; but Peter sat on the bank and grinned a morose grin as the *Minnehaha*

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pushed out from the low pier and swung like a barge in a tideway.

He watched the little fleet make its way up the narrow stretch of water and disappear behind an island, and then rose to his feet scowling. He felt rather ill-used and resentful and out of temper, and he could think of nothing to do which promised any amusement. He paused undecidedly for a moment, and at last descended the wooden steps which led to the pier and the water's edge. He meant to go home—for he was not stopping at the Aberthenay's, but across the bay at a club camp—but something he saw as he reached the base of the steps halted him suddenly.

Miss Aberthenay's maid was picking her way along the narrow beach towards the landing. She had raised a white sunshade of bewildering laciness and was twirling it over her shoulder, and it seemed to the gloom-enfolded Peter that she presented a singularly charming picture.

"Aline must give her frocks and hats and things," he reflected; "but, upon my word, Aline never looked like that in them." Then after a moment he laughed.

"It might be a lark," he said obscurely. "Anyhow, it would be a great joke on Aline," and he waited, still laughing under his breath, till the French maid was near him.

"*Bonjour, mademoiselle,*" said he. The French maid opened very wide and round and somewhat startled eyes upon him, and looked as if meditating flight.

"*Bonjour, monsieur,*" she said, and Peter thought that he discovered an infinitesimally tiny smile somewhere about the corners of her mouth.

"They've all gone off and left me," he complained bitterly.

"*Ah, cru-elle!*" said the French maid in a tone of agonised sorrow. She added that she was desolated at Monsieur's ill-fortune, and the infinitesimally tiny smile became merely tiny. Peter noted with approbation that she was not the ordinary sort of French maid, Belgian or Swiss or Toulousaine, but really and truly Parisian, with nice flat vowels and no r's.

"And they've left you, too," he observed brilliantly.

"*A ce qu'il paraît,*" said the French maid, and looked out over the cool lake with a little sigh.

"Now, I had an idea," said Peter. The French maid looked at the canoe.

"It would be a great lark," said he. "And it seems a pity," he said, "to stop here on shore doing nothing when the lake's right at hand. And the canoe, too."

The French maid regarded him silently for several seconds.

Then they both laughed, and the French maid's laugh was like altar-bells, like the trill in an Italian *aria.*

"Just the very littlest promenade around the island yonder," she suggested.

"There are other islands beyond," said Peter; but the French maid began to look frightened, and he said no more.

The picnic party had left half-a-dozen superfluous cushions on the landing-float, and Peter arranged them in his trim canoe, one for his own knees, the others for the well-being of the person in pink and white. Then he held the canoe with one hand and a foot, and, for a single pleasant moment, he held the French maid with the other hand, and made her comfortable in the bow, facing him.

She looked a bit alarmed when he began taking off his jacket and rolling up the sleeves of his shirt, but there followed, at the sight of Peter's good arms, a gleam of admiration in her eye which set Peter's modest soul a-swaggering and made him long for a bathing-jersey.

The morning was young and fresh and beautiful—very like the French maid. There was a little hazy veil of cloud to dim the sunlight, and a little aromatic breath of summer wind to film the water. A loon cried fretfully over behind one of the islands, and a pair of divers, swift and intent and businesslike, came down the lake, flying low, on affairs of importance. There was a blue heron cocked up on one leg among some reeds on a shoal, for all the world like a stork on a Christmas card, and very gorgeous little dragon-flies loafed about over the water as if they had nothing to do but play.

Peter turned in under the high-wooded bank, and they slipped along up the lake—it is a chain of lakes, narrow as a river—with no sound but the drip of water from the blade of Peter's paddle.

Now, there is no other such cadenced perfection of movement as the propulsion of a canoe by a single blade—paddling is such a futile name for it! Paddling sounds so trivial and dufferish and ungainly—no such balanced rhythmic swing of body and arms.

The French maid watched the clean, strong dip and recover of Peter's blade, and she watched the bend and sway of Peter's shoulders as he swung outboard and in, laying the weight of his body over the stroke.

"An apparition in white and pink fluffy things."

"Why don't we go round and round and round?" she demanded.

"I didn't know you wanted to go round and round and round," said Peter.

"But you put that—that oar in on only one side," said she.

"It's not an oar," objected Peter; "it's a paddle."

"Paddle?" said the French maid. "When I made a promenade in a *canot* before," said she, "the—person who made it go had two little oars—paddles, one on each end of a long stick. That was at Enghien."

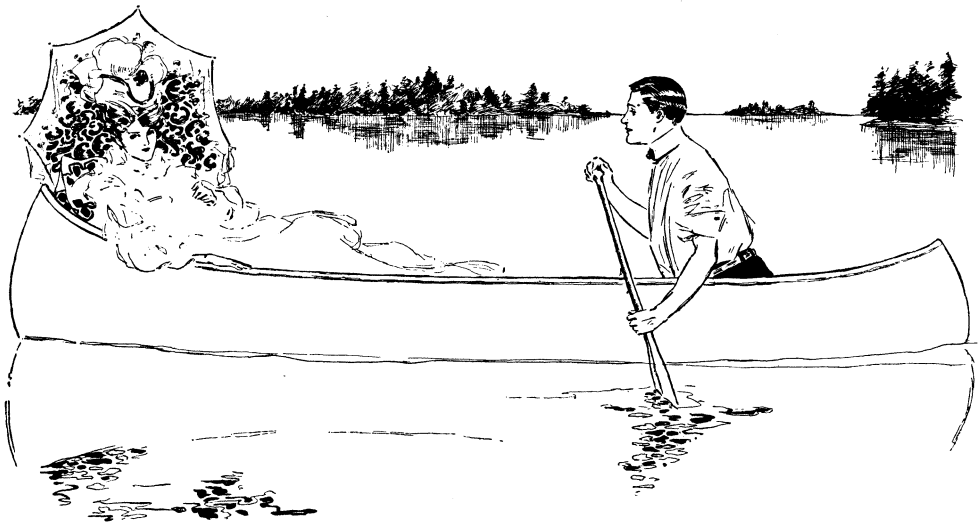
Peter shook his head sorrowfully.

"All Frenchmen are duffers," he said.

The girl sat up in sudden indignation, but the canoe, aided somewhat by the resourceful Peter, rocked so alarmingly that she instantly sank back again with a smothered scream.

"You mustn't lose your temper in a canoe," said Peter. "I said French *men*, anyhow. Would you care to know what I think of French women—girls?" Miss Aberthenay's maid turned a scornful profile; but as it was even more beautiful than scornful, Peter didn't mind.

They crossed the narrow stretch to a



"'All Frenchmen are duffers,' he said."

little high-banked wooded island, where underbrush stood thick and impenetrable, and gnarled branches hung far out over the lake. And they slipped in under one of these boughs so that Peter could take a turn about with the stern painter. Two squirrels halted in the middle of a most interesting fight to peer indignantly down at them, and a cormorant flapped squawking from the reeds near by.

"We might," said Peter thoughtfully, "go on up the lake to the picnic thing. Aline suggested that I should bring you."

The French maid held up two horror-stricken hands and said: "*Mon Dieu, que ça serait épatant!*" And Peter said: "Yes, rather." Still, he was willing to go if she'd care to.

A little puff of sweet summer air bore in from nowhere in particular and stirred certain crinkly locks of the French maid's hair, blew them across her eyes and across her tiny nose—which, being French, she had dabbed with powder—till she wrinkled it most adorably. Peter held on by a thwart of the canoe before his knees.

"Oh, wrinkle it again!" he whispered, and didn't know that he spoke. The French maid flushed from hair to throat—and possibly the rest of the way, but Peter sat marvelling at the exquisite loveliness of her, drinking it in with wide eyes that could not drink their fill, for she was more beautiful than may be told—something out of a poem—something dreamed.

"And you a *maid!*" cried Peter to his soul. "You a machine to do another woman's hair and tie another woman's shoes! Good Heavens, it's monstrous! Upon my faith and honour, you're the loveliest thing I ever saw, and you a maid!" He stared at her through a sudden wave of vicarious shame and humiliation, a sudden sickness at the thought of how this girl's life was spent; and it seemed to him that Providence made, sometimes, blunders that any child might correct.

He had expected the girl to be so very different! He had expected her to be rather pert and over-familiar and cheaply flirtatious, and he had thought that this might prove amusing for a half-hour—at any rate, that it would be something with which he might, later on, annoy Miss Aberthenay.

"A *maid!*" cried Peter to his soul, and stared at her bitterly.

"Oh, please, please!" begged the French maid very low, and her eyes dropped and the flush came again. "Please, monsieur!"

"Eh?" said Peter, and sat up blinking. "Did I stare at you? I—didn't mean to. I have little fits of insanity at times. Don't mind me." He slipped the painter and took up his paddle, and they stood out into the sunshine heading up the lake.

"We are not going to the—picnic? No?" ventured the French maid anxiously. "Mademoiselle Aline would die of the horror—but die!" she said.

"I think she'd weather it," said Peter. "And I know I'd make a friend for life of Alexander. Alexander's a connoisseur."

"The Duc?" she inquired.

"The Duc," said Peter. "And, by the way, there's a duke's daughter coming on, to-

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morrow, away from Paris—*viâ* Newport—Lulu de Vignot, the daughter of the Duc de Vignot-Severac."

The French maid sighed.

"So far from Paris!" said she. "Poor Mademoiselle! She will have *mal du pays—nostalgie*—— What do you say? Homesickness."

"Are you homesick for Paris, mademoiselle?" asked Peter.

But the French maid looked away to the blue hills, and her hands twisted in her lap, and her underlip trembled a little.

"Oh, monsieur!" she cried in a half-whisper. "Oh, monsieur! the lilacs in the Luxembourg gardens, and the chestnuts along the Boulevard St. Germain! Oh, monsieur! the little flower-shops everywhere that overflow on the pavement, red and pink and blue and white; the smell of the green trees along the street, monsieur; the *terrasses* of the *cafés;* the *marchands d'habits* and the *marchandes de moules—'La moule est fraiche, la moule est bonne!'* The children with their *nou-nous* in the Champs Elysées; the river boats that fly so fast; the gendarmes and the big cuirassiers! Paris, monsieur, Paris!"

"Yes, yes!" said Peter eagerly, and the paddle trailed from his slack hand. "Yes, I know. I've lived there. I lived there for three years once and for two years another time. Don't I know?"

The French maid looked up at him with a quick little laugh, and her eyes were very wide and there were tears in them.

"You—know, then," she said, nodding. "Do you suppose heaven is like Paris, monsieur?" she demanded.

"I have heard that it is, mademoiselle," said Peter, "but I do not know. I should say that heaven is probably more like a canoe, of a summer morning, with very blue eyes in one end of it."

"Such a tiny heaven!" criticised the French maid.

"I would not ask a greater one," said Peter. "I'm selfish, and in a broader heaven the blue eyes might escape me. I'm safe in a canoe."

"I wonder," said the French maid.

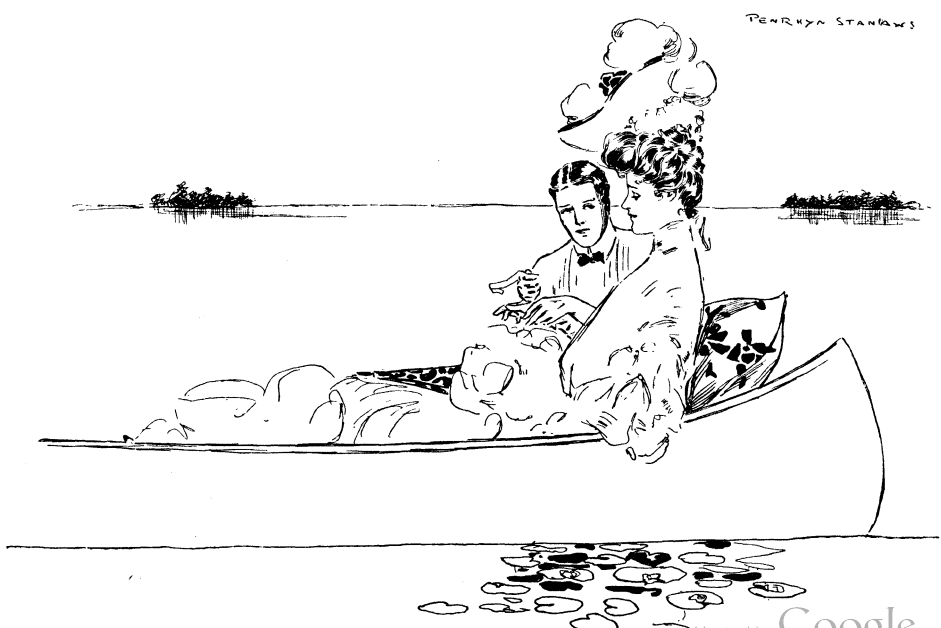
"I lied," said Peter humbly. "Safe? I'm lost—oh, utterly!"

The French maid looked around her.

"Lost?" she deprecated.

"Oh, utterly!" sighed Peter, and sent the canoe through a mask of reeds into a queer little wide bay, clouded with lily-pads and starred with waterlilies. The bay was shallow, and clumps of cat-tails and wild rice stood here and there.

The French maid gave a cry of delight, and pulled a lily whose stem appeared to be fastened to the opposite crust of the earth. Peter, by a miracle of agility, saved the canoe from an upset. By the time the girl had finished, the craft had much the appear-



"He bound them smoothly in dry linen."

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ance of the barge which once descended from Astolat—save that this time Elaine sat up.

"You've a lot of yellow pollen on the end of your nose," said Peter. The French maid put down the lily in which she had rapturously been burying her face.

"I don't care," said she. "They are beautiful! but beautiful!—the most beautiful things in the world!"

"Not so beautiful as you," said Peter to his soul. "Oh, girl, not so beautiful as you!" And the veins throbbed at his temples.

"A *maid!* Good Heavens, *a maid!*" he said, but it meant nothing to him. He didn't care.

The girl emitted a small scream and held up two fingers, across which a crimson stain was spreading. Water-grass has a wire edge.

"Have you a handkerchief?" demanded Peter. "No, not a silly bit of lace like that. Here, catch!" He tossed her his own handkerchief—it was generous enough to have bandaged an amputated arm—but the girl made but poor work of it. The bandage loosened and slipped, and would not be knotted. She raised helpless, appealing eyes to Peter.

"I cannot tie it," she said. Peter made a gesture of distress.

"What can I do?" said he. "I can't come to you. One can't stroll about in a canoe. Ah! wait a bit!" He shoved the canoe over a submerged sandbar till it grounded lightly in three or four inches of water. Then he stepped out with great care—the French maid gave a cry of alarm—and knelt beside the bow of the canoe where the girl sat.

Now, it must be written to the lasting credit of the French maid that at this crisis she did not laugh. Any man kneeling devotedly at a girl's feet in four inches of water—apparently in the middle of a lake—is a trying sight.

As for Peter, he was far beyond any sense of the humorous. He bathed the wounded fingers with a torn fragment of the handkerchief till the bleeding had ceased, and he bound them smoothly in dry linen and fastened the bandage with a bit of cord which he found in his pocket. And then he crouched there for a long time, holding the bandaged hand between his own and staring up at the exquisite, flushed cheek of the French maid, who had turned her head away. He didn't care that she was a French maid, and his heart was beating much faster than a man's heart should beat, for it has been said that he was far beyond any sense of the humorous.

He stared so long that, after a time, the girl turned back to him and met his eyes, and drew a quick little breath, and could not look away again. The bandaged hand between Peter's shook a bit.

"Monsieur!" said the French maid under her breath. "Monsieur!"

"Oh!" said Peter in a queer whisper. "Oh, there are no words for the loveliness of you! I'm tongue-tied—stammering with what I can't say."

The French maid drew away from him to arm's length, and her face was crimson.

"Monsieur!" she cried sharply. "Do you forget, or are you trying to insult me? I'm a maid, monsieur! I'm Mademoiselle Aline's *maid!* You are mad, monsieur."

And then Peter reached his height. There was good blood in Peter. He smiled into the French maid's angry eyes—a confident, scornful, easy smile.

"You're the loveliest thing I have ever seen in all my life," said he. "What do you suppose I care whether you brush another woman's hair or not? Should I love you more if someone else brushed *your* hair?"

"Love!" she cried, still in a sharp voice, half angry: "love! What have you and I to do with love? Love at first sight? That is for the romances, monsieur. It does not occur in life!"

"That's not true!" said Peter fiercely. "They lie when they tell you there's no love at first sight. It's happening every day. There's no such thing as acquiring love. You can acquire fondness, affection—all that; but love comes like a flash, mademoiselle. Why, history has been made out of love at first sight—made and unmade and altered and made again. They lie when they tell you otherwise. Loveliest, they lie!"

The French maid drew nearer to him, and she laid her free hand over his, but her eyes were still very wide and incredulous.

"Is it—possible," she said slowly, as if she spoke to herself, "that there are such—men in the world—such *men?* I had not believed—I had never met—I—oh, monsieur, monsieur!" She leaned over him, where he knelt in the water, for one little moment, with her flushed face full of the most heavenly tenderness that Peter had ever seen—save once in a dream.

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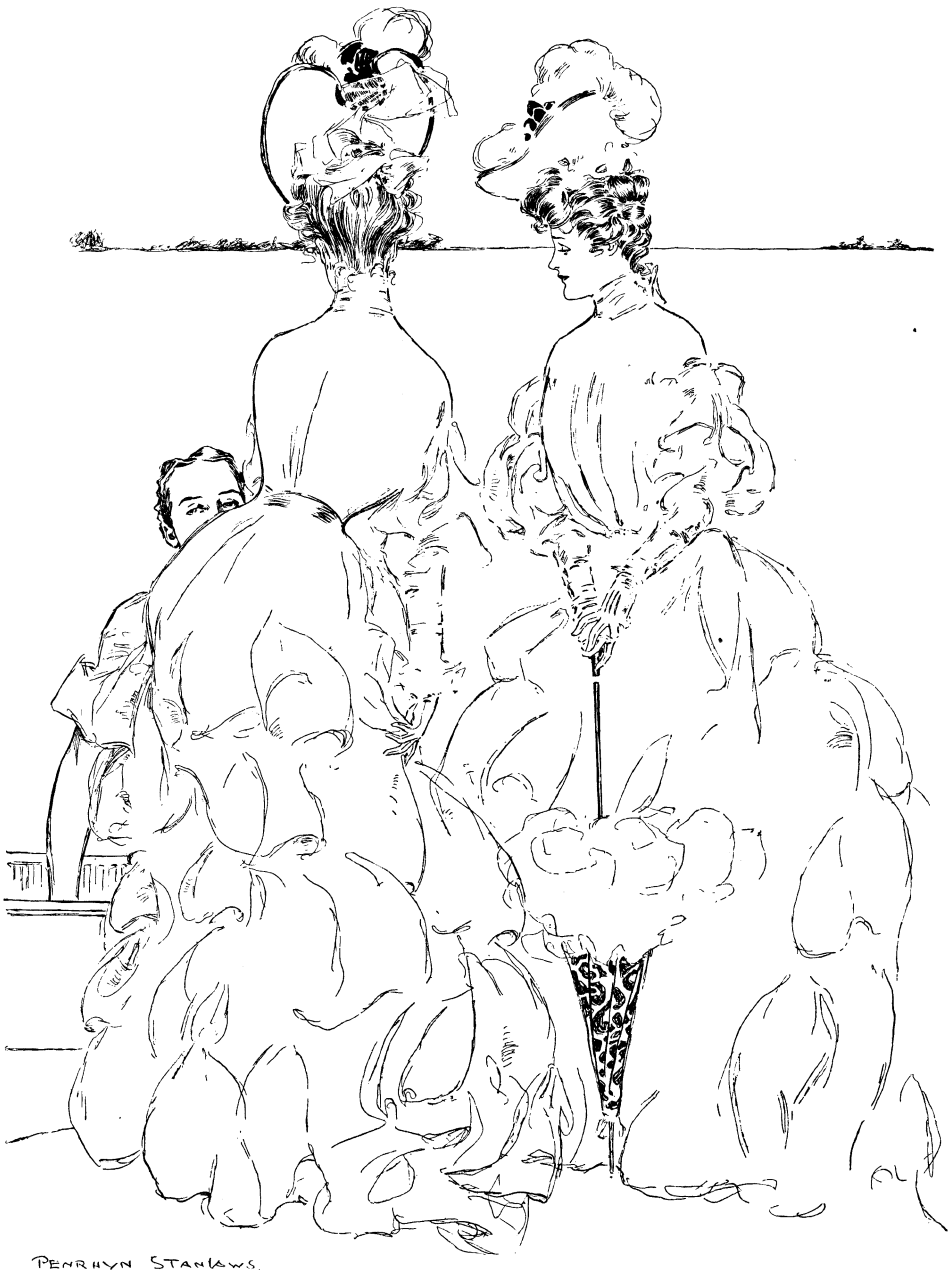

"'Oh, I knew it all the time,' said he."

"And what—then, monsieur?" she asked.

"Why, what," said Peter, in honest surprise, "what but one thing?"

The French maid gave a quick little glad cry, but it broke in a fit of nervous, hysterical laughter, and she pulled her hands away from him.

"Ah, no!" she cried. "Ah, no, no! Monsieur, I—I did not mean it; I—was—joking. It was not—— Oh, monsieur, we—go too far! No, you shall not speak! Come back into the *canot*. We will—go to the picnic party. Quick, monsieur! No, you *shall* not speak—not a word all the long way!"

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Peter climbed carefully into the canoe

and dropped his wet knees on the cushion in the stern, and he pushed off from the sandbar, and broke once more through the mask of reeds, and turned up the lake.

They were nearly an hour on the way, though they went swiftly, but the girl would not allow the mystified Peter so much as a word. She sat among her lilies, flushed a little and smiling oddly, and she sang, under her breath, from time to time, foolish old songs of the nursery—but she'd a voice like velvet.

"Heaven knows," said Peter grimly to himself, "what Aline will say; but here we go!" And he swung the canoe into the little bay where the picnic was to take place.

The others were there on the beach, and they waved their arms to him, and Alexander, closely followed by Aline Aberthenay, came down to the water's edge to catch the prow of the canoe and help out the French maid. Both he and Miss Aberthenay were laughing.

"Oh, Peter!" said she, "you're very, very easy; but how did you find out that it was Lulu!"

Peter looked at the French maid, and his heart gave one magnificent and unparalleled leap; but he smiled quizzically at Miss Aberthenay.

"Oh, I knew it all the time," said he.

And that was a lie.

But late that night, Miss Aberthenay, up in her room, took her friend by the shoulders and shook her violently.

"You've robbed me of my Peter," she said. "You're a deceitful, designing cat!"

And that was the truth.

"WHO GOES THERE?"
A STUDY BY B. BOESE.

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By C. J. KING.

PHOTOGRAPHY has made wondrous strides during the last ten or fifteen years, and the advent of the hand-camera, or the detective-camera, as it used to be called, with the dry plate, has induced many thousands to take up photographic work who, in the old days, could see no pleasure in carrying into the field or on to the seashore all the necessary apparatus for working the wet plate. In those days photography, as it is now practised, would have been impossible. No one encumbered with all the necessary paraphernalia would have dared to take up the positions on rocks and other treacherous places into which one must get to do good work, for the ability to move quickly and surely is absolutely essential to success.

Perhaps one of the most necessary points is to be able to take certain classes of waves at close quarters. This, of course, necessitates the possession of considerable agility on the part of the photographer, and where slippery, wet boulders have to be negotiated, with a huge breaker coming after one at full speed, compactness of apparatus is of the utmost importance.

I once found this out by experience. I was alone on some rocks of very uneven size and shape, with a tremendous sea running. The situation was somewhat curious, as it was one where two seas were meeting. This had been caused by a sudden shift of wind, which drove one set of waves back against those which the previous wind had raised. The result was that the two huge seas met at a certain corner where I had taken up my position, and here they piled themselves upon one another, making what was literally a pyramid of water some twenty or twenty-five feet in height. The sight was a grand one, and I was very anxious to get a photographic record of it, and in my anxiety to do so I ventured down too close to the water. I had not at that time the experience which I now possess, and was dressed in a long, pilot, cloth coat, reaching almost down to my feet—a very unsuitable garment for the work. After waiting a few minutes, two of the sea monsters met and piled up splendidly. I snapped my shutter off and ought to have been content; but it flashed through my mind that if I could only get the breakdown of this mass of water, what a fine pair of pictures the two would make; so I instantly shifted my plate and had another shot, this time at the mass of churned-up foam as it came towards me. But I had waited too long, and before I could scramble away, heavily dressed as I was, the sea had caught

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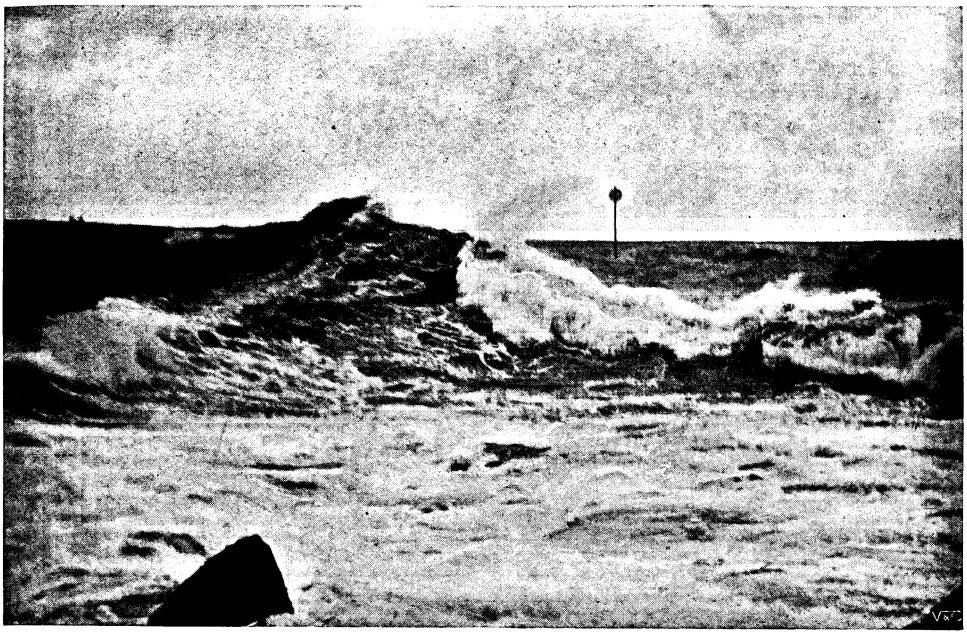

Photo by] [*C. J. King, Scilly.*

THE TWO HUGE WAVES MEETING AS DESCRIBED IN TEXT.

me, and how I escaped with my life I can hardly tell, for the water was up round my armpits before I had time to think, and I could only just feel the rocks with my toes. I stuck to my camera, however, and I had to empty the water out of one end of it,

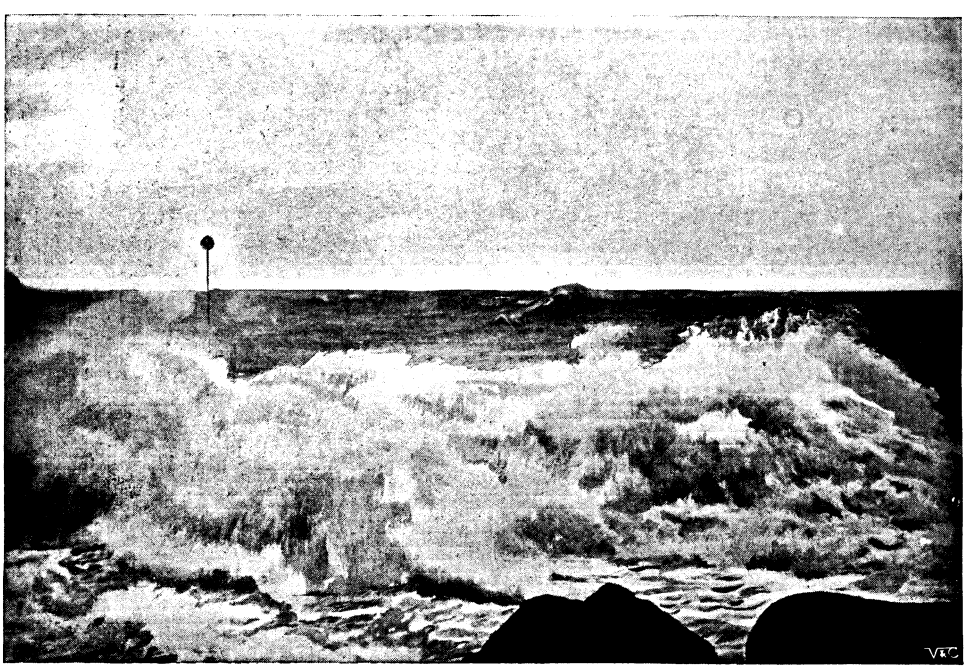

Photo by] [*C. J. King.*

THE BREAKING DOWN OF THE TWO WAVES WHICH NEARLY DROWNED THE PHOTOGRAPHER.

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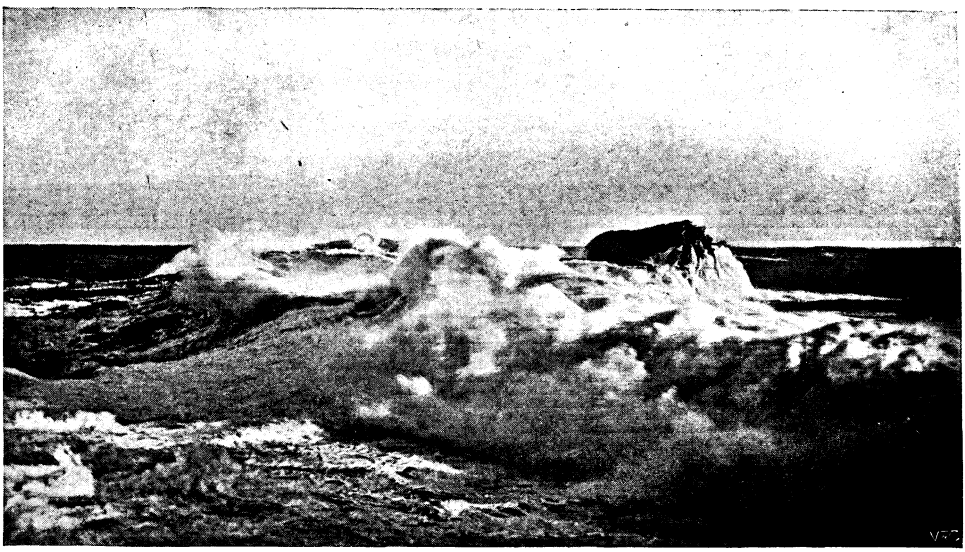

Photo by] [*C. J. King.*

THIS IS THE GREAT WAVE DESCRIBED IN ARTICLE BEFORE IT REACHED THE PULPIT ROCK.

yet the plates were dry, and the results are here shown. This was a lesson to me. I always now dress in oilskins and rubber boots, and when possible take a friend with me, and a rope. Had those waves come up two inches higher, nothing could have saved me, as, having once lost my feet, I should have been carried away by the undertow,

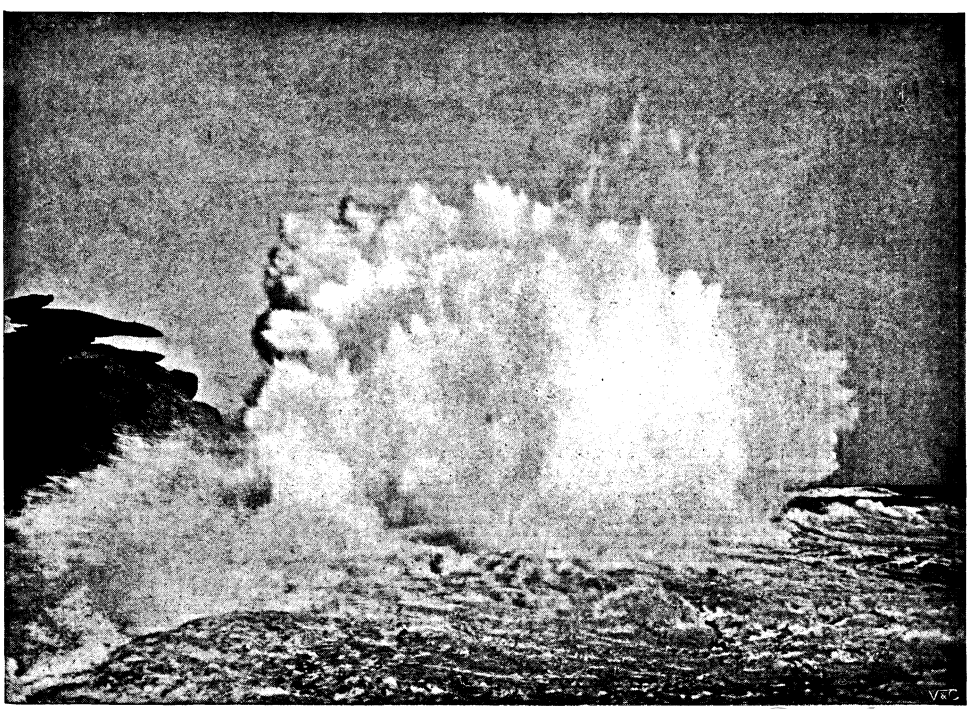

Photo by] [*C. J. King.*

SHOWING THE GREAT WAVE STRIKING BELOW THE PULPIT ROCK, AND THE SPRAY FLYING TO THE HEIGHT OF 150 FEET.

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Photo by] [*C. J. King.*

THE PULPIT ROCK OF SCILLY: TONS OF WATER ARE, HOUR AFTER HOUR, BEING HURLED INTO THE AIR.

and the next breakers would have pounded me on those cruel rocks into a mass of jelly.

This is the class of wave which I have found the most dangerous, but there are others with which it is not at all safe to take liberties. Many people have an idea that if you take up your position on a large, flat rock ten or fifteen feet above the sea-level, you are perfectly safe. I thought so once myself; but after ten years' constant wave work, I have come to another conclusion. I would strongly advise those who think of taking up this fascinating work, to use all possible care, and even with an ebb-tide never to venture in rough weather upon any rock less than twenty feet above the level of the sea, without having first watched the selected spot for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour; and with a flood-tide on no account to go nearer than thirty feet above it. This

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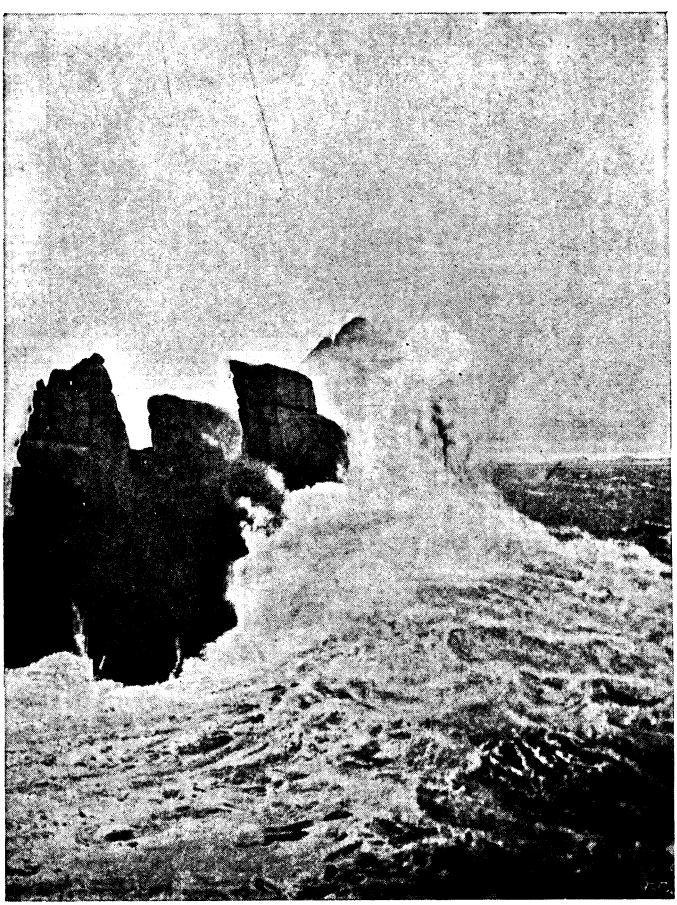
may seem to some to be ridiculously careful; but I am speaking from experience, and am not overdoing it. Not long since I was caught in what might have been a very nasty predicament. On this occasion a gale was blowing, and I was dressed in my usual oilskin suit. I wished to take several breakers which were rolling in across my point of vision, so that I looked right along the top of them as they curled over. I watched a certain rock for some time, and selected a spot which I thought would suit my purpose and well out of harm's way. The wind was S.E., and I sat upon the rock with my face looking

A PERILOUS POSITION.

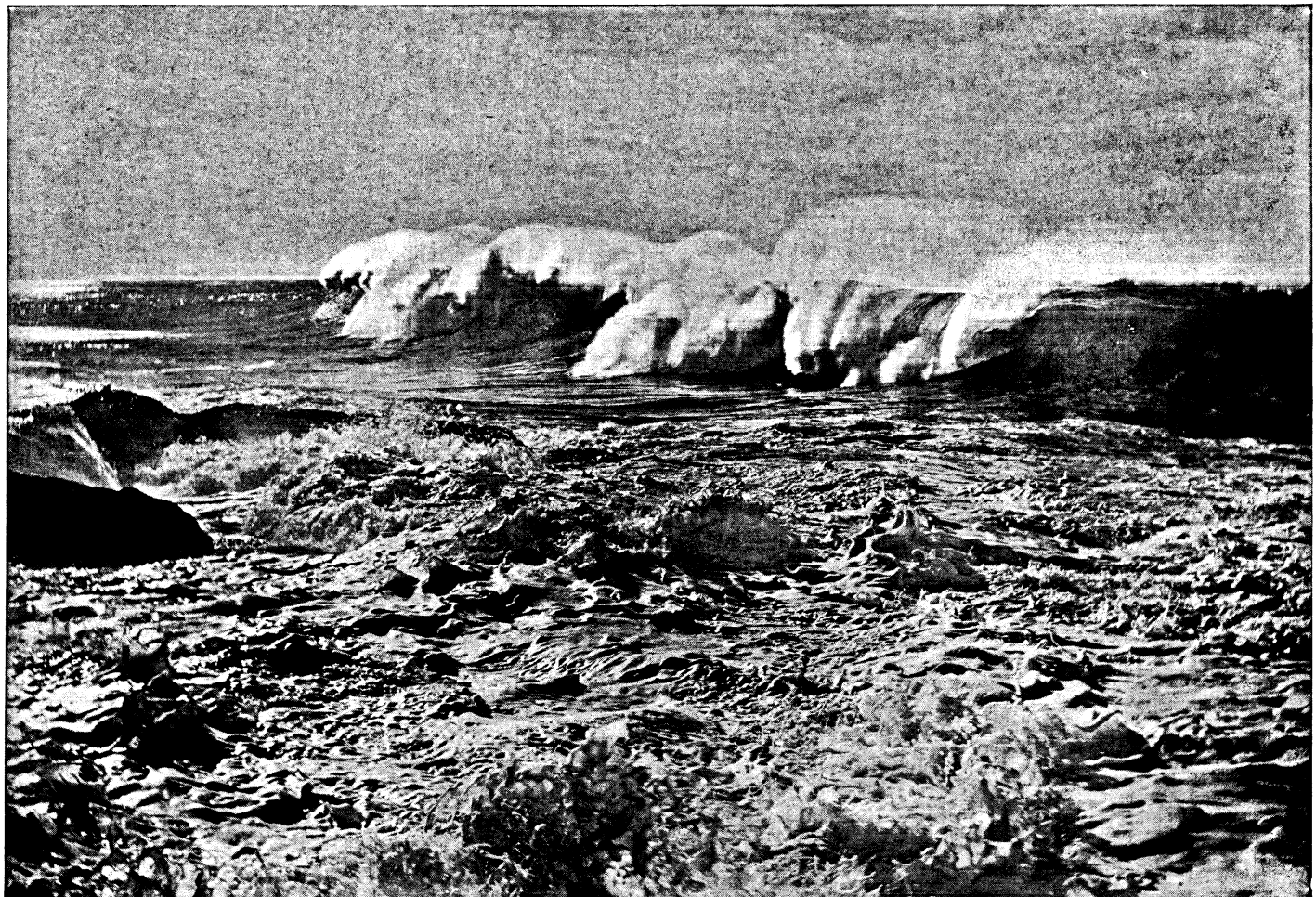


Two photos by] [*C. J. King.*

A MILLION TONS OF WATER ON THE MOVE: THE ROCK IS ABOUT 100 FEET HIGH.

N.E. I was not, therefore, facing the direction whence the waves came, but sitting sideways to them. I was intent upon my work, perfectly secure, as I thought, and watching my view-finder for the best effect, when suddenly I found myself sitting in the foaming white sea. A wave, far larger than its fellows, had rushed up the rock and surrounded me, and had I not been provided with oilskin trousers instead of leggings, which I often wear, I should have been drenched to the skin. That, of course, is a small matter, and one with which the wave-photographer has frequently to put up; but it is the danger of these extraordinary waves which I wish more particularly to emphasise. Perhaps it may sound strange, but there is no doubt about it that the wave-photographer, if he would procure pictures which will take the public fancy, must be prepared to take his life in his hand.

Another very nasty experience, but one which is not at all uncommon, and against which one must be on the



A WAVE-STUDY OFF BRISBANE. PHOTOGRAPHED BY W. REID.

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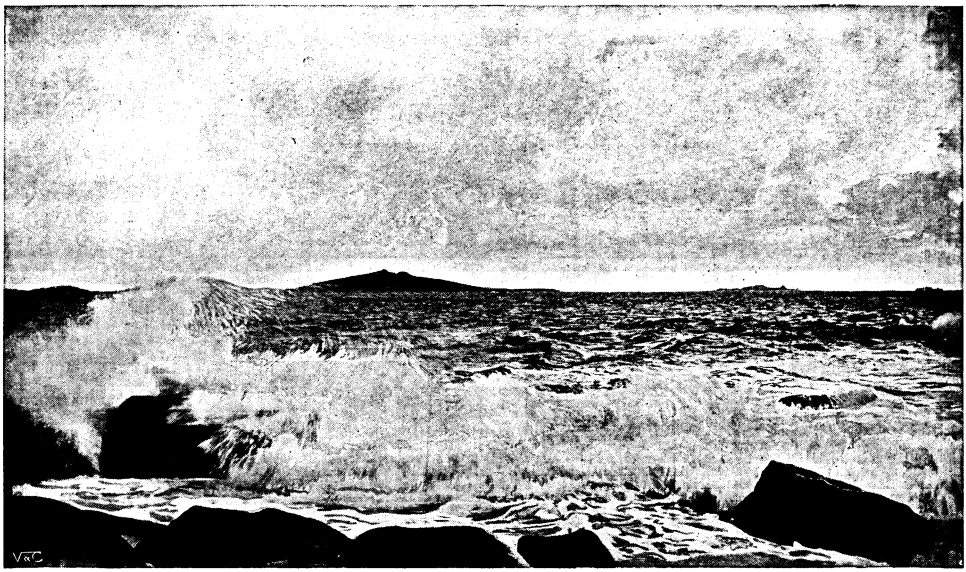

Photo by] [*C. J. King.*

A SQUALLY DAY.

look-out, is that of being blown down by the wind in very bad weather. This has happened to me over and over again and is very unpleasant. It is bad for the photographer and bad also for his camera. It generally happens in this way. The picture which it is desirable to secure is only procurable from a certain spot, to reach which it is necessary to negotiate a number of rounded boulders of various sizes. This, of course, necessitates the making of a series of jumps and long strides, and it is when making these, at the moment when one or both feet are off the rock, that one is caught by the wind and hurled down among the boulders. I have an old box-camera which has gone through this acrobatic performance with me so often that I wonder it has not

Photo by] [*C. J. King.*

A FINE BREAKING WAVE.

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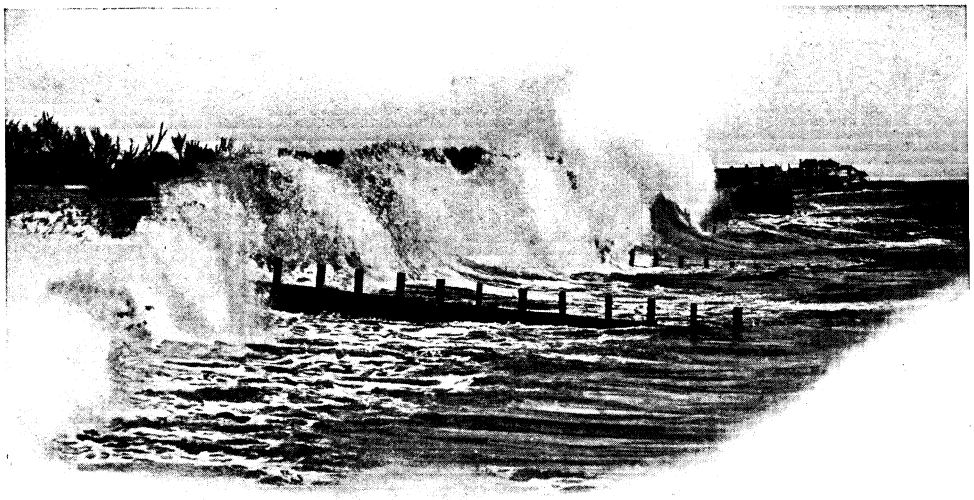

Photo by] [*L. A. Simpson.*

WAVE-FORMATIONS AGAINST A PARADE.

been smashed beyond repair; but though it has found its way to the maker and been patched up over and over again, it is still a valuable and reliable old friend.

But wave-photography is not always dangerous—in fact, the largest wave which I have ever taken—or, for that matter, ever seen—was captured without any danger at all. I am showing a print of it herewith, and when the reader realises that the rock shown in the picture is eighty feet above the sea, the height of the wave may be estimated. To be within the mark, I put it at 150 feet, or about three times the height of those which break on the well-known Colombo breakwater. I am doubtful if there

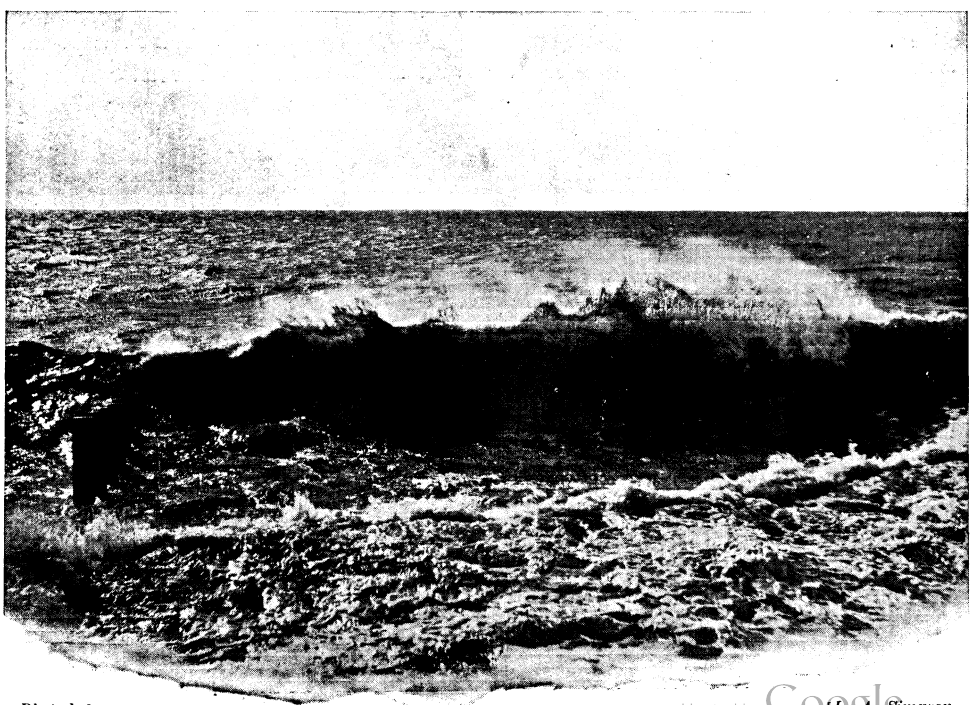

Photo by] [*L. A. Simpson.*

A STUDY OF RAGGED SPRAY.

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Photo by] [*C. J. King.*

ROCK-TORN WATER.

is any place where the spray dashes higher than at this spot. Here the full force of the Atlantic rollers meets its first check, in its hitherto unimpeded course of thousands of miles. Thousands of tons of water are, hour after hour, being hurled into the air in the form of spray, and the sight once seen is not likely to be forgotten. At such times the atmosphere is charged with spray, and it drifts past in clouds like rain-showers.

Another variety of waves, and one of the most beautiful, is that of the great comber rolling in against the wind. Unfortunately they can seldom be seen for any length of time, for the very cause of their extreme beauty is at the same time the cause of their destruction—namely, the contrary wind. It is a glorious sight to see these huge waves rushing on, heaving up, and curling over in the teeth of the wind, which takes the foam from their crests and converts it into spindrift, like the silver hair of some hoary giant blown back by the force of the gale. One very great advantage to the wave photographer is afforded by this class of wave, and it is this. The spray is blown from him, instead of towards him. This question of spray is one of the most difficult connected with the work. At almost

Photo by] [*C. J. King.*

"THE ATMOSPHERE IS CHARGED WITH SPRAY."

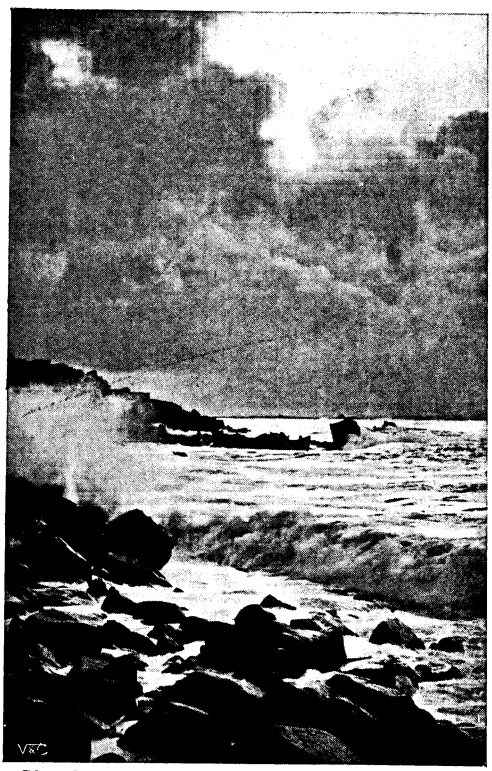

Photo by] [*C. J. King.*

SUITABLE WEATHER FOR THE WORK.

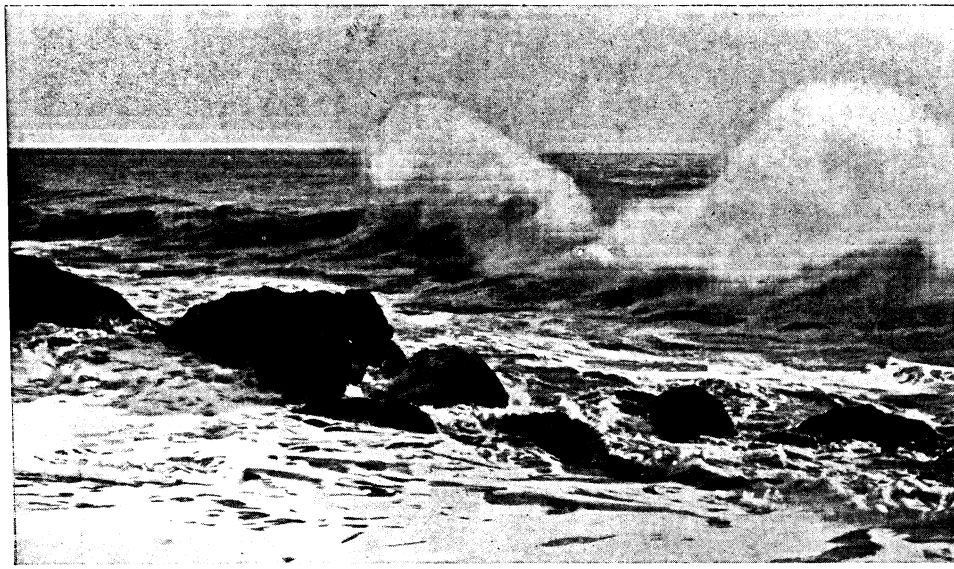

Photo by] FOAM RESISTING THE WIND. *[L. A. Simpson.*

all times when waves are to be procured, the spray is coming in clouds towards the camera, and it is most difficult to keep the lens free from it; but with spindrift it is just the reverse—the spray is blown from the camera and makes the work far more easy.

Another phase of this work is that of the strange positions into which one has to get sometimes to procure a picture from the best possible point of view—the apex of a conical-shaped boulder, for instance, with only room for one foot on the top, is not a particularly comfortable attitude in which to remain long; and the uneven boulders around are not just the sort of thing one would select to fall upon. But taken as a whole, wave-photography is a fascinating, health-giving occupation.

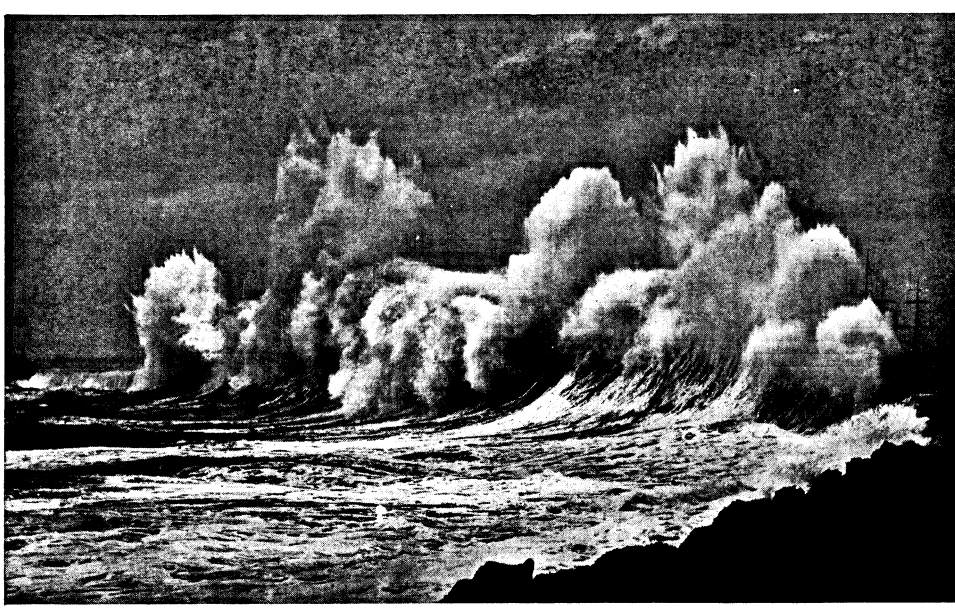

Photo by] COLOMBO BREAKWATER DURING THE MONSOON. *[W. Bayley.*

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THE SOUL OF NICHOLAS SNYDERS,

THE MISER OF ZANDAM.

By JEROME K. JEROME.*

ONCE upon a time in Zandam, which is by the Zuider Zee, there lived a wicked man named Nicholas Snyders. He was mean and hard and cruel, and loved but one thing in the world, and that was gold. And even that not for its own sake. He loved the power gold gave him—the power to tyrannise and to oppress, the power to cause suffering at his will. They said he had no soul, but there they were wrong. All men own—or, to speak more correctly, are owned by—a soul; and the soul of Nicholas Snyders was an evil soul. He lived in the old windmill which still is standing on the quay, with only little Christina to wait upon him and keep house for him. Christina was an orphan whose parents had died in debt. Nicholas, to Christina's everlasting gratitude, had cleared their memory—it cost but a few hundred florins—in consideration that Christina should work for him without wages. Christina formed his entire household, and only one willing visitor ever darkened his door, the widow Toelast. Dame Toelast was rich and almost as great a miser as Nicholas himself. "Why should not we two marry?" Nicholas had once croaked to the widow Toelast. "Together we should be masters of all Zandam." Dame Toelast had answered with a cackling laugh; but Nicholas was never in haste.

One afternoon, Nicholas Snyders sat alone at his desk in the centre of the great semi-circular room that took up half the ground floor of the windmill, and that served him for an office, and there came a knocking at the outer door.

"Come in!" cried Nicholas Snyders.

He spoke in a tone quite kind for Nicholas Snyders. He felt so sure it was Jan knocking at the door—Jan Van der Voort, the young sailor, now master of his own ship, come to demand of him the hand of little Christina. In anticipation, Nicholas Snyders tasted the joy of dashing Jan's hopes to the ground; of hearing him plead, then rave; of watching the growing pallor that would overspread Jan's handsome face as Nicholas would, point by point, explain to him the consequences of defiance—how, firstly, Jan's old mother should be turned out of her home, his old father put into prison for debt; how, secondly, Jan himself should be pursued without remorse, his ship be bought over his head before he could complete the purchase. The interview would afford to Nicholas Snyders sport after his own soul. Since Jan's return the day before, he had been looking forward to it. Therefore, feeling sure it was Jan, he cried "Come in!" quite cheerily.

But it was not Jan. It was somebody Nicholas Snyders had never set eyes on before. And neither, after that one visit, did Nicholas Snyders ever set eyes upon him again. The light was fading, and Nicholas Snyders was not the man to light candles before they were needed, so that he was never able to describe with any precision the stranger's appearance. Nicholas thought he seemed an old man, but alert in all his movements; while his eyes—the one thing about him Nicholas saw with any clearness—were curiously bright and piercing.

"Who are you?" asked Nicholas Snyders, taking no pains to disguise his disappointment.

"I am a pedlar," answered the stranger. His voice was clear and not unmusical, with just the suspicion of roguishness behind.

"Not wanting anything," answered Nicholas Snyders drily. "Shut the door and be careful of the step."

But instead the stranger took a chair and drew it nearer, and, himself in shadow, looked straight into Nicholas Snyders' face and laughed.

"Are you quite sure, Nicholas Snyders? Are you quite sure there is nothing you require?"

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"Nothing," growled Nicholas Snyders—"except the sight of your back."

The stranger bent forward and with his long, lean hand touched Nicholas Snyders playfully upon the knee. "Wouldn't you like a soul, Nicholas Snyders?" he asked.

"Think of it," continued the strange pedlar, before Nicholas could recover power of speech. "For forty years you have drunk the joy of being mean and cruel. Are you not tired of the taste, Nicholas Snyders? Wouldn't you like a change? Think of it, Nicholas Snyders—the joy of being loved, of hearing yourself blessed, instead of cursed? Wouldn't it be good fun, Nicholas Snyders—just by way of a change? If you don't like it, you can return and be yourself again."

What Nicholas Snyders, recalling all things afterwards, could never understand was, why he sat there, listening in patience to the stranger's talk; for, at the time, it seemed to him the jesting of a wandering fool. But something about the stranger had impelled him.

"I have it with me," continued the odd pedlar; "and as for price——" The stranger made a gesture indicating dismissal of all sordid details. "I look for my reward in watching the result of the experiment. I am something of a philosopher. I take an interest in these matters. See." The stranger dived between his legs and produced from his pack a silver flask of cunning workmanship and laid it on the table.

"Its flavour is not unpleasant," explained the stranger. "A little bitter; but one does not drink it by the goblet: a wineglassful, such us one would of old Tokay, while the mind of both is fixed on the same thought: 'May my soul pass into him, may his pass into me!' The operation is quite simple: the secret lies within the drug." The stranger patted the quaint flask as though it had been some little dog.

"You will say: 'Who will exchange souls with Nicholas Snyders?'" The stranger appeared to have come prepared with an answer to all questions. "My friend, you are rich; you need not fear. It is the possession men value the least of all they have. Choose your soul and drive your bargain. I leave that to you with one word of counsel only: you will find the young readier than the old—the young, to whom the world promises all things for gold. Choose you a fine, fair, fresh, young soul, Nicholas Snyders; and choose it quickly. Your hair is somewhat grey, my friend. Taste, before you die, the joy of living."

The strange pedlar laughed and, rising, closed his pack. Nicholas Snyders neither moved nor spoke, until with the soft clanging of the massive door his senses returned to him. Then, seizing the flask the stranger had left behind him, he sprang from his chair, meaning to fling it after him into the street. But the flashing of the firelight on its burnished surface stayed his hand.

"After all, the case is of value," Nicholas chuckled, and put the flask aside and, lighting the two tall candles, buried himself again in his green-bound ledger. Yet still from time to time Nicholas Snyders' eye would wander to where the silver flask remained half hidden among dusty papers. And later there came again a knocking at the door, and this time it really was young Jan who entered.

Jan held out his great hand across the littered desk.

"We parted in anger, Nicholas Snyders. It was my fault. You were in the right. I ask you to forgive me. I was poor. It was selfish of me to wish the little maid to share with me my poverty. But now I am no longer poor."

"Sit down," responded Nicholas in kindly tone. "I have heard of it. So now you are master and the owner of your ship—your very own."

"My very own after one more voyage," laughed Jan. "I have Burgomaster Allart's promise."

"A promise is not a performance," hinted Nicholas. "Burgomaster Allart is not a rich man; a higher bid might tempt him. Another might step in between you and become the owner."

Jan only laughed. "Why, that would be the work of an enemy, which, God be praised, I do not think that I possess."

"Lucky lad!" commented Nicholas; "so few of us are without enemies. And your parents, Jan, will they live with you?"

"We wished it," answered Jan, "both Christina and I. But the mother is feeble. The old mill has grown into her life."

"I can understand," agreed Nicholas. "The old vine torn from the old wall withers. And your father, Jan; people will gossip. The mill is paying?"

Jan shook his head. "It never will again; and the debts haunt him. But all that, as I tell him, is a thing of the past. His creditors have agreed to look to me and wait."

"All of them?" queried Nicholas.

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"All of them I could discover," laughed Jan.

Nicholas Snyders pushed back his chair and looked at Jan with a smile upon his wrinkled face. "And so you and Christina have arranged it all?"

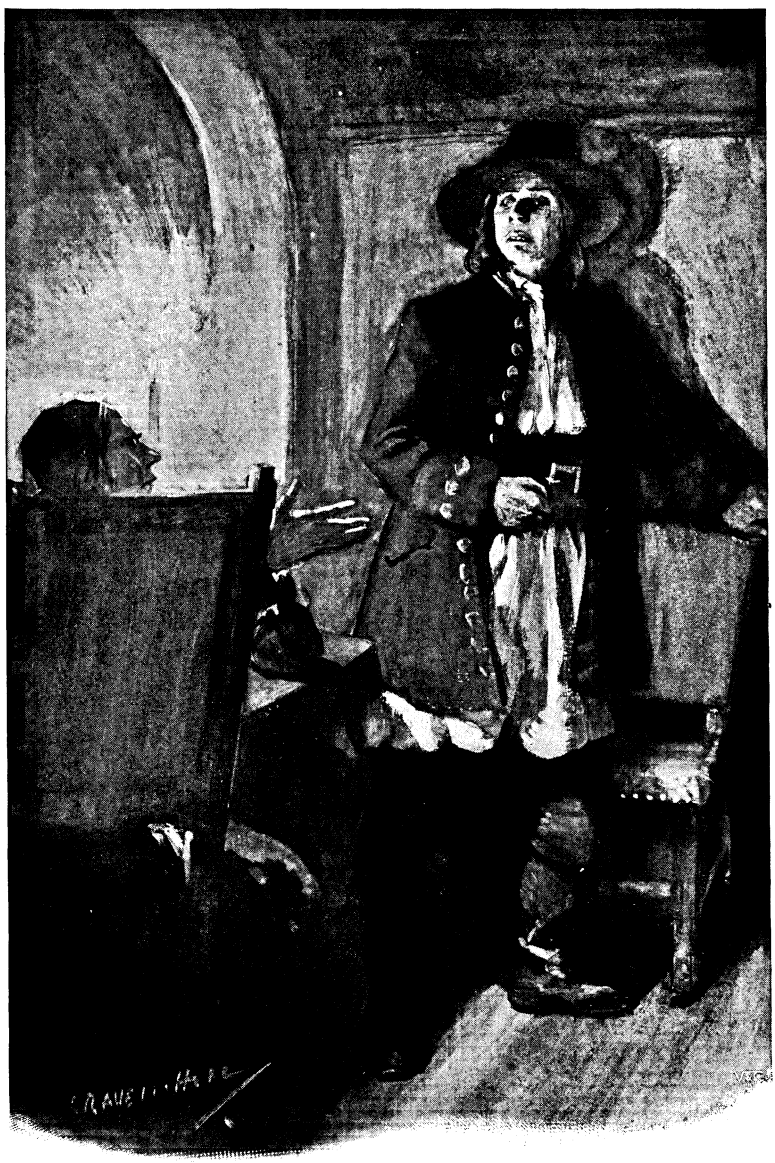
"With your consent, sir," answered Jan.

"You will wait for that?" asked Nicholas.

"We should like to have it, sir."

Jan smiled, but the tone of his voice fell agreeably on Nicholas Snyders' ear. Nicholas Snyders loved best beating the dog that growled and showed its teeth.

"Better not wait for that," said Nicholas Snyders. "You might have to wait long."



"'So nothing changes you, Nicholas Snyders.'"

Jan rose, an angry flush upon his face. "So nothing changes you, Nicholas Snyders. Have it your own way, then."

"You will marry her in spite of me?"

"In spite of you and of your friends the fiends, and of your master the Devil!" flung out Jan. For Jan had a soul that was generous and brave and tender and excessively short-tempered. Even the best of souls have their failings.

"I am sorry," said old Nicholas.

"I am glad to hear it," answered Jan.

"I am sorry for your mother," explained Nicholas. "The poor dame, I fear, will be homeless in her old age. The mortgage shall be foreclosed, Jan, on your wedding day. I am sorry for your father, Jan. His creditors, Jan—you have overlooked just one. I am sorry for him, Jan. Prison has always been his dread. I am sorry even for you, my young friend. You will have to begin life over again. Burgomaster Allart is in the hollow of my hand. I have but to say the word, your ship is mine. I wish you joy of your bride, my young friend. You must love her very dearly—you will be paying a high price for her."

It was Nicholas Snyders' grin that maddened Jan. He sought for something that,

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"There sat Christina, asleep before the burnt-out grate."

thrown straight at the wicked mouth, should silence it, and by chance his hand lighted on the pedlar's silver flask. In the same instant Nicholas Snyders' hand had closed upon it also. The grin had died away.

"Sit down," commanded Nicholas Snyders. "Let us talk further." And there was that in his voice that compelled the younger man's obedience.

"You wonder, Jan, why I seek always anger and hatred. I wonder at times myself. Why do generous thoughts never come to me, as to other men? Listen, Jan; I am in a whimsical mood. Such things cannot be, but it is a whim of mine to think it might have been. Sell me your soul, Jan, sell me your soul, that I, too, may taste this love and gladness that I hear about. For a little while, Jan, only for a little while, and I will give you all you desire."

The old man seized his pen and wrote. "See, Jan, the ship is yours beyond mishap; the mill goes free; your father may hold up his head again. And all I ask, Jan, is that you drink to me, willing the while that your soul may go from you and become the soul of old Nicholas Snyders—for a little while, Jan, only for a little while."

With feverish hands the old man had drawn the stopper from the pedlar's flagon, had poured the wine into twin glasses. Jan's inclination was to laugh, but the old man's eagerness was almost frenzy. Surely he was mad; but that would not make less binding the paper he had signed. A true man does not jest with his soul, but the face of Christina was shining down on Jan from out the gloom.

"You will mean it?" whispered Nicholas Snyders.

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"May my soul pass from me and enter into Nicholas Snyders!" answered Jan, replacing his empty glass upon the table. And the two stood looking for a moment into one another's eyes.

And the high candles on the littered desk flickered and went out, as though a breath had blown them, first one and then the other.

"I must be getting home," came the voice of Jan from the darkness. "Why did you blow out the candles?"

"We can light them again from the fire," answered Nicholas. He did not add he had meant to ask that same question of Jan. He thrust them among the glowing logs, first one and then the other; and the shadows crept back into their corners.

"You will not stop and see Christina?" asked Nicholas.

"Not to-night," answered Jan.

"The paper that I signed," Nicholas reminded him—"you have it?"

"I had forgotten it," Jan answered.

The old man took it from the desk and handed it to him. Jan thrust it into his pocket and went out. Nicholas bolted the door behind him and returned to his desk; sat long there, his elbow resting on the open ledger.

Nicholas pushed the ledger aside and laughed. "What foolery! As if such things could be! The fellow must have bewitched me."

Nicholas crossed to the fire and warmed his hands before the blaze. "Still, I am glad he is going to marry the little lass. A good lad, a good lad."

Nicholas must have fallen asleep before the fire. When he opened his eyes, it was to meet the grey dawn. He felt cold, stiff, hungry, and decidedly cross. Why had not Christina woke him up and given him his supper? Did she think he had intended to pass the night on a wooden chair? The girl was an idiot. He would go upstairs and tell her through the door just what he thought of her.

His way upstairs led through the kitchen. To his astonishment, there sat Christina, asleep before the burnt-out grate.

"Upon my word," muttered Nicholas to himself, "people in this house don't seem to know what beds are for!"

But it was not Christina, so Nicholas told himself. Christina had the look of a frightened rabbit: it had always irritated him. This girl, even in her sleep, wore an impertinent expression—a delightfully impertinent expression. Besides, this girl was pretty—marvellously pretty. Indeed, so pretty a girl Nicholas had never seen in all his life before. Why had the girls, when Nicholas was young, been so entirely different! A sudden bitterness seized Nicholas: it was as though he had just learnt that long ago, without knowing it, he had been robbed.

The child must be cold. Nicholas fetched his fur-lined cloak and wrapped it about her.

There was something else he ought to do. The idea came to him while drawing the cloak around her shoulders, very gently, not to disturb her—something he wanted to do, if only he could think what it was. The girl's lips were parted. She appeared to be speaking to him, asking him to do this thing—or telling him not to do it: Nicholas could not be sure which. Half-a-dozen times he turned away, and half-a-dozen times stole back to where she sat sleeping with that delightfully impertinent expression on her face, her lips parted. But what she wanted, or what it was he wanted, Nicholas could not think.

Perhaps Christina would know. Perhaps Christina would know who she was and how she got there. Nicholas climbed the stairs, swearing at them for creaking.

Christina's door was open. No one was in the room; the bed had not been slept upon. Nicholas descended the creaking stairs.

The girl was still asleep. Could it be Christina herself? Nicholas examined the delicious features one by one. Never before, so far as he could recollect, had he seen the girl; yet around her neck—Nicholas had not noticed it before—lay Christina's locket, rising and falling as she breathed. Nicholas knew it well; the one thing belonging to her mother Christina had insisted on keeping, the one thing about which she had ever defied him. She would never have parted with that locket. It must be Christina herself. But what had happened to her?

Or to himself. Remembrance rushed in upon him. The old pedlar! The scene with Jan! But surely all that had been a dream? Yet there upon the littered desk still stood the pedlar's silver flask, together with the twin stained glasses.

Nicholas tried to think, but his brain was in a whirl. A ray of sunlight streaming through the window fell across the dusty room. Nicholas had never seen the sun, that he could recollect. Involuntarily he stretched his hands towards it, felt a pang of grief when it vanished, leaving only the grey light.

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He drew the rusty bolts, flung open the great door. A strange world lay before him, a new world of lights and shadows, that wooed him with their beauty—a world of low, soft voices that called to him. There came to him again that bitter sense of having been robbed.

"I could have been so happy all these years," murmured old Nicholas to himself. "It is just the little town I could have loved—so quaint, so quiet, so homelike. I might have had friends, old cronies, children of my own maybe——"

A vision of the sleeping Christina flashed before his eyes. She had come to him a child, feeling only gratitude towards him. Had he had eyes with which to see her, all things might have been different.

Was it too late? He is not so old—not so very old. New life is in his veins. She still loves Jan, but that was the Jan of yesterday. In the future, Jan's every word and deed will be prompted by the evil soul that was once the soul of Nicholas Snyders—that Nicholas Snyders remembers well. Can any woman love that, let the case be as handsome as you will?

Ought he, as an honest man, to keep the soul he had won from Jan by what might be called a trick? Yes, it had been a fair bargain, and Jan had taken his price. Besides, it was not as if Jan had fashioned his own soul; these things are chance. Why should one man be given gold, and another be given parched peas? He has as much right to Jan's soul as Jan ever had. He is wiser, he can do more good with it. It was Jan's soul that loved Christina; let Jan's soul win her if it can. And Jan's soul, listening to the argument, could not think of a word to offer in opposition.

Christina was still asleep when Nicholas re-entered the kitchen. He lighted the fire and cooked the breakfast and then aroused her gently. There was no doubt it was Christina. The moment her eyes rested on old Nicholas, there came back to her the frightened rabbit look that had always irritated him. It irritated him now, but the irritation was against himself.

"You were sleeping so soundly when I came in last night——" Christina commenced.

"And you were afraid to wake me," Nicholas interrupted her. "You thought the old curmudgeon would be cross. Listen, Christina. You paid off yesterday the last debt your father owed. It was to an old sailor—I had not been able to find him before. Not a cent more do you owe, and there remains to you, out of your wages, a hundred florins. It is yours whenever you like to ask me for it."

Christina could not understand, neither then nor during the days that followed; nor did Nicholas enlighten her. For the soul of Jan had entered into a very wise old man, who knew that the best way to live down the past is to live boldly the present. All that Christina could be sure of was that the old Nicholas Snyders had mysteriously vanished, that in his place remained a new Nicholas, who looked at her with kindly eyes—frank and honest, compelling confidence. Though Nicholas never said so, it came to Christina that she herself, her sweet example, her ennobling influence it was that had wrought this wondrous change. And to Christina the explanation seemed not impossible—seemed even pleasing.

The sight of his littered desk was hateful to him. Starting early in the morning, Nicholas would disappear for the entire day, returning in the evening tired but cheerful, bringing with him flowers that Christina laughed at, telling him they were weeds. But what mattered names? To Nicholas they were beautiful. In Zandam the children ran from him, the dogs barked after him. So Nicholas, escaping through byways, would wander far into the country. Children in the villages around came to know a kind old fellow who loved to linger, his hands resting on his staff, watching their play, listening to their laughter; whose ample pockets were storehouses of good things. Their elders, passing by, would whisper to one another how like he was in features to wicked old Nick, the miser of Zandam, and would wonder where he came from. Nor was it only the faces of the children that taught his lips to smile. It troubled him at first to find the world so full of marvellously pretty girls—of pretty women also, all more or less lovable: it bewildered him. Until he found that, notwithstanding, Christina remained always in his thoughts the prettiest, the most lovable of them all. Then every pretty face rejoiced him: it reminded him of Christina.

On his return the second day, Christina had met him with sadness in her eyes. Farmer Beerstraater, an old friend of her father's, had called to see Nicholas; not finding Nicholas, had talked a little with Christina. A hard-hearted creditor was turning him out of his farm. Christina pretended not to know that the creditor was Nicholas himself, but marvelled that such

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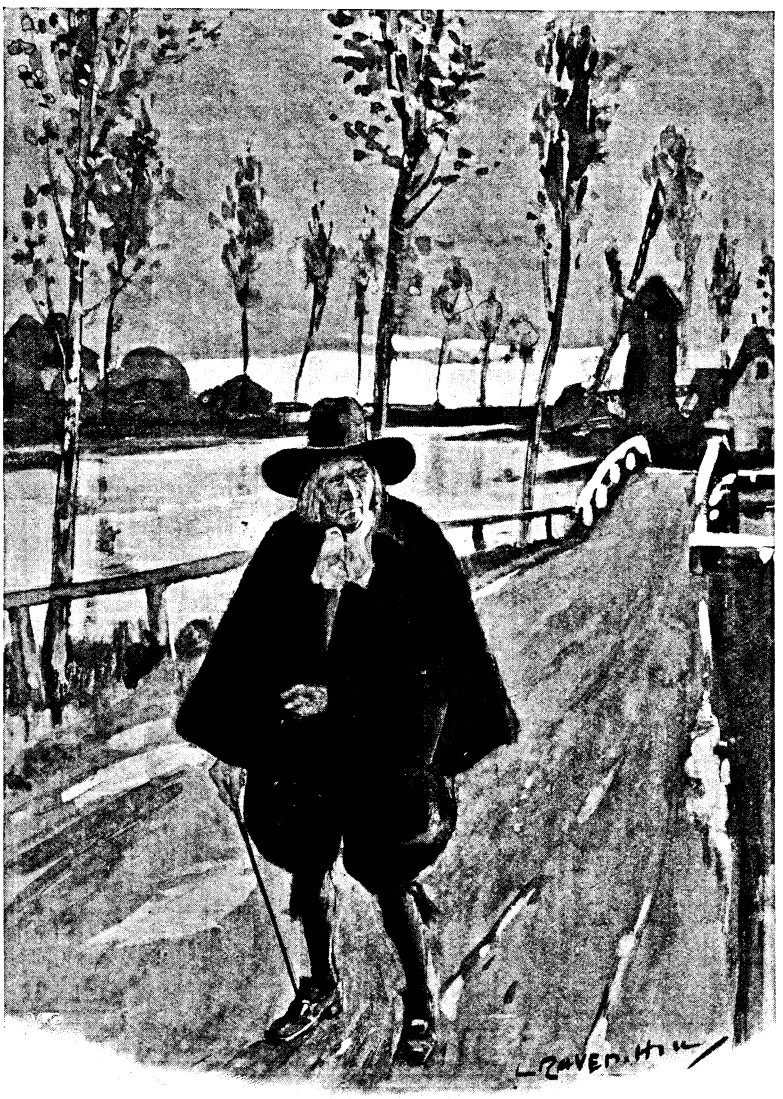
wicked men could be. Nicholas said nothing, but the next day Farmer Beerstraater had called again, all smiles, blessings, and great wonder.

"But what can have come to him?" repeated Farmer Beerstraater over and over again.



"So Nicholas would wander far into the country."

Christina had smiled and answered that perhaps the good God had touched his heart; but thought to herself that perhaps it had been the good influence of another. The tale flew. Christina found herself besieged on every hand, and finding her intercessions invariably successful, grew day by day more pleased with herself, and by consequence more pleased with Nicholas Snyders. For Nicholas was a cunning old gentleman. Jan's soul in him took delight in undoing the evil the soul of Nicholas had wrought. But the brain of Nicholas Snyders that remained to him whispered: "Let the little maid think it is all her doing."

The news reached the ears of Dame Toelast. The same evening saw her seated in the inglenook opposite Nicholas Snyders, who smoked and seemed bored.

"You are making a fool of yourself, Nicholas Snyders," the Dame told him. "Everybody is laughing at you."

"I had rather they laughed than cursed me?" growled Nicholas.

"Have you forgotten all that has passed between us?" demanded the Dame.

"Wish I could," sighed Nicholas.

"At your age—" commenced the Dame.

"I am feeling younger than I ever felt in all my life," Nicholas interrupted her.

"You don't look it," commented the Dame.

"What do looks matter?" snapped Nicholas. "It is the soul of a man that is the real man."

"They count for something, as the world goes," explained the Dame. "Why, if I liked to follow your example and make a fool of myself, there are young men, fine young men, handsome young men——"

"Don't let me stand in your way," interposed Nicholas quickly. "As you say, I am

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old and I have a devil of a temper. There must be many better men than I am, men more worthy of you."

"I don't say there are not," returned the Dame: "but nobody more suitable. Girls for boys, and old women for old men, as I have told them. I haven't lost my wits, Nicholas Snyders, if you have. When you are yourself again——"

"Nicholas Snyders sprang to his feet. "I am myself," he cried, "and intend to remain myself! Who dares say I am not myself?"

"I do," retorted the Dame with exasperating coolness. "Nicholas Snyders is not himself when at the bidding of a pretty-faced doll he flings his money out of the window with both hands. He is a creature bewitched, and I am sorry for him. She'll fool you for the sake of her friends till you haven't a cent left, and then she'll laugh at you. When you are yourself, Nicholas Snyders, you will be crazy with yourself—remember that." And Dame Toelast marched out and slammed the door behind her.

"Girls for boys, and old women for old men." The phrase kept ringing in his ears. Hitherto his new-found happiness had filled his life, leaving no room for thought. But the old Dame's words had sown the seed of reflection.

Was Christina fooling him? The thought was impossible. Never once had she pleaded for herself, never once for Jan. The evil thought was the creature of Dame Toelast's evil mind. Christina loved him. Her face brightened at his coming. The fear of him had gone out of her; a pretty tyranny had replaced it. But was it the love that he sought? Jan's soul in old Nick's body was young and ardent. It desired Christina not as a daughter, but as a wife. Could it win her in spite of old Nick's body? The soul of Jan was an impatient soul. Better to know than to doubt.

"Do not light the candles; let us talk a little by the light of the fire only," said Nicholas. And Christina, smiling, drew her chair towards the blaze. But Nicholas sat in the shadow.

"You grow more beautiful every day, Christina," said Nicholas—"sweeter and more womanly. He will be a happy man who calls you wife."

The smile passed from Christina's face. "I shall never marry," she answered.

"Never is a long word, little one."

"A true woman does not marry the man she does not love."

"But may she not marry the man she does?" smiled Nicholas.

"Sometimes she may not," Christina explained.

"And when is that?"

Christina's face was turned away. "When he has ceased to love her."

The soul in old Nick's body leapt with joy. "He is not worthy of you, Christina. His new fortune has changed him. Is it not so? He thinks only of money. It is as though the soul of a miser had entered into him. He would marry even Dame Toelast for the sake of her gold-bags and her broad lands and her many mills, if only she would have him. Cannot you forget him?"

"I shall never forget him. I shall never love another man. I try to hide it; and often I am content to find there is so much in the world that I can do. But my heart is breaking." She rose and, kneeling beside him, clasped her hands around him. "I am glad you have let me tell you," she said. "But for you I could not have borne it. You are so good to me."

For answer he stroked with his withered hand the golden hair that fell disordered about his withered knees. She raised her eyes to his; they were filled with tears, but smiling.

"I cannot understand," she said. "I think sometimes that you and he must have changed souls. He is hard and mean and cruel, as you used to be." She laughed, and the arms around him tightened for a moment. "And now you are kind and tender and great, as once he was. It is as if the good God had taken away my lover from me to give to me a father."

"Listen to me, Christina," he said. "It is the soul that is the man, not the body. Could you not love me for my new soul?"

"But I do love you," answered Christina, smiling through her tears.

"Could you as a husband?"

The firelight fell upon her face. Nicholas, holding it between his withered hands, looked into it long and hard; and reading what he read there, laid it back against his breast and soothed it with his withered hand.

"I was jesting, little one," he said. "Girls for boys, and old women for old men. And so, in spite of all, you still love Jan?"

"I love him," answered Christina. "I cannot help it."

"And if he would, you would marry him, let his soul be what it may?"

"I love him," answered Christina. "I cannot help it."

Old Nicholas sat alone before the dying fire. Is it the soul or the body that is the

"So from the deck of Jan's ship they watched old Zandam."

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real man? The answer was not so simple as he had thought it.

"Christina loved Jan"—so Nicholas mumbled to the dying fire—"when he had the soul of Jan. She loves him still, though he has the soul of Nicholas Snyders. When I asked her if she could love me, it was terror I read in her eyes, though Jan's soul is now in me; she divined it. It must be the body that is the real Jan, the real Nicholas. If the soul of Christina entered into the body of Dame Toelast, should I turn from Christina, from her golden hair, her fathomless eyes, her asking lips, to desire the shrivelled carcass of Dame Toelast? No; I should still shudder at the thought of her. Yet, when I had the soul of Nicholas Snyders, I did not loathe her, while Christina was naught to me. It must be with the soul that we love, else Jan would still love Christina and I should be Miser Nick. Yet here am I loving Christina, using Nicholas Snyders' brain and gold to thwart Nicholas Snyders' every scheme, doing everything that I know will make him mad when he comes back into his own body; while Jan cares no longer for Christina, would marry Dame Toelast for her broad lands, her many mills. Clearly it is the soul that is the real man. Then ought I not to be glad, thinking I am going back into my own body, knowing that I shall wed Christina? But I am not glad; I am very miserable. I shall not go with Jan's soul, I feel it; my own soul will come back to me. I shall be again the hard, cruel, mean old man I was before, only now I shall be poor and helpless. The folks will laugh at me, and I shall curse them, powerless to do them evil. Even Dame Toelast will not want me when she learns all. And yet I must do this thing. So long as Jan's soul is in me, I love Christina better than myself. I must do this for her sake. I love her—I cannot help it."

Old Nicholas rose, took from the place where a month before he had hidden it, the silver flask of cunning workmanship.

"Just two more glassfuls left, about," mused Nicholas, as he gently shook the flask against his ear. He laid it on the desk before him, then opened once again the old green ledger, for there still remained work to be done.

He woke Christina early. "Take these letters, Christina," he commanded. "When you have delivered them all, but not before, go to Jan; tell him I am waiting here to see him on a matter of business." He kissed her and seemed loth to let her go.

"I shall only be a little while," smiled Christina.

"All partings take but a little while," he answered.

Old Nicholas had foreseen the trouble he would have. Jan was content, had no desire to be again a sentimental young fool, eager to saddle himself with a penniless wife. Jan had other dreams.

"Drink, man, drink!" cried Nicholas impatiently, "before I am tempted to change my mind. Christina, provided you marry her, is the richest bride in Zandam. There is the deed; read it; and read quickly."

Then Jan consented, and the two men drank. And there passed a breath between them as before; and Jan with his hands covered his eyes a moment.

It was pity, perhaps, that he did so, for in that moment Nicholas snatched at the deed that lay beside Jan on the desk. The next instant it was blazing in the fire.

"Not so poor as you thought!" came the croaking voice of Nicholas. "Not so poor as you thought! I can build again, I can build again!" And the creature, laughing hideously, danced with its withered arms spread out before the blaze, lest Jan should seek to rescue Christina's burning dowry before it was destroyed.

Jan did not tell Christina. In spite of all Jan could say, she would go back. Nicholas Snyders drove her from the door with curses. She could not understand. The only thing clear was that Jan had come back to her.

"Twas a strange madness that seized upon me," Jan explained. "Let the good sea breezes bring us health."

So from the deck of Jan's ship they watched old Zandam till it vanished into air.

Christina cried a little at the thought of never seeing it again; but Jan comforted her, and later new faces hid the old.

And old Nicholas married Dame Toelast, but, happily, lived to do evil only for a few years longer.

Years after, Jan told Christina the whole story, but it sounded very improbable, and Christina—though, of course, she did not say so—did not quite believe it, but thought Jan was trying to explain away that strange month of his life during which he had wooed Dame Toelast. Yet it certainly was strange that Nicholas, for the same short month, had been so different from his usual self.

"Perhaps," thought Christina, "if I had not told him I loved Jan, he would not have gone back to his old ways. Poor old gentleman! No doubt it was despair."

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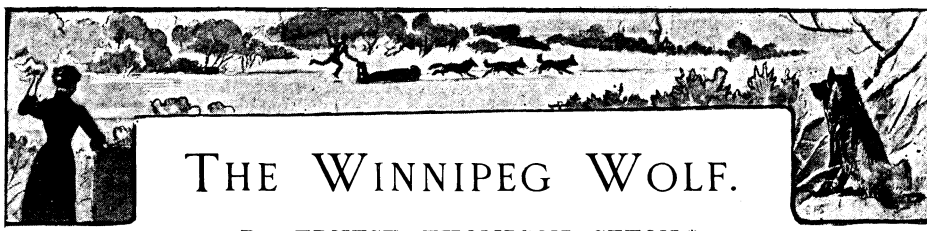

THE WINNIPEG WOLF.

BY ERNEST THOMPSON SETON.*

IT was during the great blizzard of 1882 that I first met the Winnipeg wolf. I had left St. Paul in the middle of March, to cross the prairie to Winnipeg, expecting to be there in twenty-four hours, but the Storm King had planned it otherwise and sent a heavy-laden eastern blast. The snow came down in a furious, steady torrent, hour after hour. I never before had seen such a storm. All the world was lost in snow—snow, snow, snow—whirling, biting, stinging, drifting snow—and the puffing, monstrous engine was compelled to stop at the command of those tiny, feathery crystals of spotless purity.

Many strong hands with shovels came to the delicately curled snowdrifts that barred our way, and in an hour the engine could pass—only to stick in another drift yet farther on. It was dreary work—day after day, night after night, sticking in the drifts and digging ourselves out, and still the snow went whirling and playing about us.

"Twenty-two hours to Emerson," said the official; but nearly two weeks of digging passed before we did reach Emerson, and the poplar county where the thickets stop all drifting of the snow. Thenceforth the train went swiftly, the poplar woods grew more thickly—we passed for long through solid forests, then perhaps through an open space. As we neared St. Boniface, the eastern outskirts of Winnipeg, we dashed across a little glade fifty yards wide, and there in the middle was a group that stirred me to the very soul.

In plain view was a great rabble of dogs, large and small, black, white, and yellow, wriggling and heaving this way and that way in a rude ring; to one side was a little yellow dog stretched and quiet in the snow; on the outer part of the ring was a huge black dog, bounding about and barking, but keeping ever behind the moving mob. And in the middle, the centre and cause of it all, was a great, grim, solitary grey wolf.

Wolf? He looked like a lion. There he stood all alone—resolute—calm—with bristling mane, and legs braced firmly, glancing this way and that, to be ready for an attack in any direction. There was a curl on his lips—it looked like scorn, but I suppose it was really the fighting snarl of tooth display. Led by a wolfish-looking dog that should have been ashamed, the pack dashed in—for the twentieth time, no doubt. But the great grey form leaped here and there, and chop, chop, chop went those fearful jaws; no other sound from the lonely warrior, but a death-yelp from more than one of his foes, as those that were able again sprang back, and left him statuesque as before, untamed, unmaimed, and contemptuous of them all.

How I wished for the train to stick in a snowdrift now, as so often before; for all my heart went out to that grey wolf, and I longed to go and help him. But the snow-deep glade flashed by, the poplar trunks shut out the view, and we went on without a stop.

This was all I saw, and it seemed little; but before many days had passed I knew that I had surely been favoured with a view

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in broad daylight of a rare and wonderful creature, none less than the Winnipeg wolf.

His was a strange history—a wolf that preferred the city to the country, that passed by the sheep to kill the dogs, and that always hunted alone.

Though in telling the story of *le Garou*, as he was called by some, I speak of these things as familiar to all, it is very sure that to many citizens of the town they were unknown. The smug shopkeeper on the main street had scarcely heard of him until the day after the final scene at the slaughter-house, when his great carcass was carried to Hine's taxidermist shop and there mounted, to be exhibited later at the Chicago World's Fair, and to be destroyed, alas! in the fire that reduced the Grammar School to ashes in 1896.

* * * * *

It seems that Fiddler Paul, the handsome ne'er-do-well of the half-breed world, readier to hunt than to work, was prowling with his gun along the wooded banks of the Red River by Kildonan one day in the June of 1880. He saw a grey wolf come out of a hole in a bank, and fired a chance shot that killed it. Having made sure, by sending in his dog, that no other large wolf was there, he crawled into the den, and found, to his utter amazement and delight, eight young wolves—nine bounties of ten dollars each. How much is that? A fortune surely. He used a stick vigorously, and with the assistance of the yellow cur, all the little ones were killed but one. There is a superstition about the last of a brood—it is not lucky to kill it. So Paul set out for town with the scalp of the old wolf, the scalps of the seven young, and the last cub alive.

The saloon-keeper who got the dollars for which the scalps were exchanged soon got the living cub. He grew up at the end of a chain, but developed a chest and jaws that no dog around could match. He was kept in the yard for the amusement of customers, and this amusement usually took the form of baiting the captive with dogs. The young wolf was bitten and mauled nearly to death on several occasions, but he always recovered, and each month there were fewer dogs willing to face him. His life was as hard as it could be. There was but one gleam of gentleness in it all, and that was the friendship that grew up between him and Little Jim, the son of the saloon-keeper.

Jim was a wilful little rascal, with a mind of his own. He took to the wolf because it had killed a dog that had bitten him. He thenceforth fed the wolf and made a pet of it, and the wolf responded by allowing him to take liberties which no one else dared venture.

Jim's father was not a model parent. He usually spoiled his son, but at times would get in a rage and beat him cruelly for some trifle. Jim was quick to learn that he was beaten not because he had done wrong, but because he had made his father angry. If, therefore, he could keep out of the way until that anger had cooled, he had no further cause for worry. One day, seeking safety in flight with his father behind him, he dashed into the wolf's kennel, and his grizzly chum, thus unceremoniously awakened, went to the door, displayed a double row of ivories, and plainly said to the father: "Don't you dare to touch him!"

If Hogan could have shot the wolf then and there, he would have done so, but the chance was about equal of killing his son; so he let them alone, and half an hour later laughed at the whole affair. Thenceforth Little Jim made for the wolf's den whenever he was in danger, and sometimes the only notice anyone had that the boy had been in mischief was seeing him sneak in behind the grizzly captive.

Economy in hired help was a first principle with Hogan. Therefore his "barkeep" was a Chinaman. He was a timid, harmless creature, so Paul des Roches did not hesitate to bully him. One day, finding Hogan out, and the Chinamen alone is charge, Paul, already tipsy, demanded a drink on credit, and Tung Ling, acting on standing orders, refused. His artless explanation: "No good, neber pay," so far from clearing up the difficulty, brought Paul staggering back of the bar to avenge the insult. The Celestial might have suffered grievous bodily hurt but that Little Jim was at hand and had a long stick, with which he adroitly tripped up the fiddler and sent him sprawling. He staggered to his feet swearing he would have Jim's life. But the child was near the back door, and soon found refuge in the wolf's kennel.

Seeing that the boy had a protector, Paul got the long stick, and from a safe distance began to belabour the wolf. The grizzly creature raged at the end of the chain, but, though he parried many cruel blows by seizing the stick in his teeth, he was suffering severely, when Paul realised that Jim, whose tongue had not been idle, was fumbling away with nervous fingers to set the wolf loose, and soon would succeed. Indeed, it would

"In the middle was a great, grim, solitary grey wolf."

have been done already but for the strain that the wolf kept on the chain.

The thought of being in the yard at the mercy of the huge animal that he had so enraged gave the brave Paul a thrill of terror.

Jim's wheedling voice—"Hold on now, Wolfie; back up just a little, and you shall have him. Now do; there's a good Wolfie"—was enough; the fiddler fled, and carefully closed all doors behind him.

Thus the friendship between Jim and his pet grew stronger, and the wolf, as he developed his splendid natural powers, gave daily evidence also of the mortal hatred he bore to men that smelt of whisky, and to all dogs, the causes of his sufferings. This peculiarity, coupled with his love for the child—and all children seemed to be included to some extent—grew with his growth, and seemed to prove the ruling force of his life.

At this time—that is, the autumn of 1881—there were great complaints among the Qu'Appelle ranchmen that the wolves were increasing in their country and committing great depredations among the stock. Poisoning and trapping had proved failures, and when a distinguished German visitor appeared at the club in Winnipeg and announced that he was bringing some dogs that could easily rid the country of wolves, he was listened to with unusual interest. For the cattlemen are fond of sport, and the idea of helping their business by establishing a kennel of wolf-hounds was very alluring.

The German soon produced as samples of his dogs two magnificent Danes, one white, the other blue with black spots and a singular white eye that completed an expression of unusual ferocity. Each of these great creatures weighed nearly two hundred pounds. They were muscled like tigers, and the German was readily believed when he claimed that these two alone were more than a match for the biggest wolf. He thus described their method of hunting: "All you have to do is show them the trail, and, even if it is a day old, away they go on it. They cannot be shaken off. They will soon find that wolf, no matter how he doubles and hides. Then they close on him. He turns to run, the blue dog takes him by the haunch and throws him like this," and the German jerked a roll of bread into the air; "then before he touches the ground the white dog has his head, the other his tail, and they pull him apart like that."

It sounded all right; at any rate, everyone was eager to put it to the proof. Several of the residents said there was a fair chance of finding a grey wolf along the Assiniboin, so a hunt was organised. But they searched in

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vain for three days, and were giving it up when someone suggested that down at Hogan's saloon was a wolf chained up, that they could get for the value of the bounty, and, though little more than a year old, he would serve to show what the dogs could do.

The value of Hogan's wolf went up at once when he knew the importance of the occasion; besides, "he had conscientious scruples." All his scruples vanished, however, when his views as to price were met. His first care was to get Little Jim out of the way by sending him on an errand to his grandma's, then the wolf was driven into his box, nailed in, and the whole thing was drawn on a wagon to the open prairie along the portage trail.

The dogs could scarcely be held back, they were so eager for the fray as soon as they smelt the wolf. But several strong men held their leash, the wagon was drawn half a mile further, and the wolf was turned out with some difficulty. At first he looked scared and sullen. He tried to get out of sight, but made no attempt to bite. However, on finding himself free as well as hissed and hooted at, he started off at a slinking trot towards the south, where the land seemed broken. The dogs were released at that moment, and, barking furiously, they bounded forward after the young wolf. The men cheered loudly and rode behind them. From the very first it was clear that he had no chance. The dogs were much swifter; the white one could run like a greyhound. The German was wildly enthusiastic as she flew across the prairie, gaining visibly on the wolf at every second. Many bets were offered on the dogs, but there were no takers. The only bets accepted were dog against dog. The young wolf went at speed now, but within a mile the white dog was close behind him—was closing in.

"The last cub alive."

The German shouted: "Now watch and see that wolf go up in the air!"

In a moment the animals were together. Both recoiled, neither went up in the air, but the white dog rolled over with a fearful gash in his shoulder—out of the fight, if not killed. Ten seconds later the blue-spot arrived, open-mouthed. The meeting was as quick and almost as mysterious as in the other case. They barely touched each other. The grey one bounded aside, his head out of sight for a moment in the flash of quick movement. Spot reeled and showed a bleeding flank. Urged on by the men, he assaulted again, but only to get another wound that taught him to keep off.

Now came the keeper with four more huge dogs. They turned these loose, and the men, armed with clubs and lassos, were closing to help in finishing the wolf, when a small boy came charging over the plain on a pony. He leaped to the ground, and wriggling through the ring, flung his arms around the wolf's neck. He called him his "Wolfie pet," his "dear Wolfie"—the wolf licked his face and wagged its tail—then through his streaming tears he turned on the crowd and—well, it would not do to print what he said! He was only nine, but he was very old-fashioned as well as a rude little boy. He had been brought up in a low saloon, and had been an apt pupil at picking up the vile talk of the place. He cursed them one and all, and for generations back; he did not spare even his own father.

If a man had used such shocking and insulting language, he might have been lynched; but coming from a baby, the hunters did not know what to do, so finally did the best thing. They laughed aloud—not at themselves, that is not considered good form—but they all laughed at the German whose wonderful dogs had been worsted by a half-grown wolf.

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Jimmie now thrust his dirty, tear-stained little fist down into his very-much-of-a-boy's pocket, and from among marbles and chewing-gum, as well as tobacco, matches, pistol-cartridges, and other contraband, he fished out a flimsy bit of grocer's twine and fastened it around the wolf's neck. Then, still blubbering a little, he set out for home on the pony, leading the wolf, and hurling a final threat and an anathema at the German nobleman: "Fur two cents I'd sic him on *you*."

Early that winter Jimmie was taken down with a fever. The wolf howled miserably in the yard when he missed his little friend, and finally on the boy's demand was admitted to the sick-room, and there this great wild dog—for that is all a wolf is—continued faithfully watching by his friend's bedside.

The fever had seemed slight at first, so that everyone was shocked when there came suddenly a turn for the worse, and, three days before Christmas, Jimmie died. He had no more sincere mourner than his "Wolfie." The great, grey creature howled in miserable answer to the church-bell tolling when he followed the body on Christmas Eve to the graveyard at St. Boniface. He soon came back to the premises behind the saloon, but when an attempt was made to chain him again, he leaped a board-fence and was finally lost sight of.

* * * * *

Later that same winter, old Renaud, the trapper, with his pretty, half-breed daughter, Ninette, came to live in a little log-cabin on the river bank. He knew nothing about Jimmie Hogan, and he was not a little puzzled to see wolf-tracks and signs along the river on both sides between St. Boniface and Fort Garry. He listened with interest and doubt to tales that the Hudson Bay Company's men told of a great grey wolf that had come to live in the region about, and even to enter the town at night, and that was in particular attached to the woods about St. Boniface Church.

On Christmas Eve of that year, the bell tolled again as it had done for Jimmie, and a lone and melancholy howling from the woods almost convinced Renaud that the stories were true. He knew the wolf-cries—the howl for help, the love song, the lonely wail, and the sharp defiance of the wolves. This was the lonely wail.

The trapper went to the riverside and gave an answering howl. A shadowy form left the far woods and crossed on the ice to

"Barking furiously, they bounded forward after the young wolf."

where the man sat, log-still, on a log; came up near him, circled past and sniffed, then its eye glowed; it growled like a dog that is a little angry, and glided back into the night.

Thus Renaud knew, and before long the people in general began to learn, that a huge grey wolf was living in their town. He was the terror of dogs, killing them on all possible occasions, and some said that he had devoured more than one half-breed who was out on a spree.

And this was the Winnipeg wolf that I had seen that day in the wintry woods. I had longed to go to his help, thinking the odds so hopelessly against him, but later knowledge changed the thought. I do not know how that fight ended, but I do know that he was seen many times afterwards, and some of the dogs were not.

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Thus he led the strangest life that ever his kind had known. Free of all the woods and plains, he elected rather to lead a life of daily hazard in the town. Not a street in Winnipeg that he did not know; not a policeman in Winnipeg that had not seen his swift and shadowy form in the grey dawn as he passed where he would; not a dog in Winnipeg that did not cower and bristle when the tell-tale wind brought proof that old Garou was crouching near. But in all this lurid record there was one recurring pleasant thought—Garou never was known to harm a child.

* * * * *

Ninette was a desert-born beauty like her Indian mother, but grey-eyed like her Normandy father, a sweet girl of sixteen, the belle of her set. She might have married any one of the richest and steadiest young men of the country, but, of course, in feminine perversity her heart was set on that ne'er-do-well, Paul des Roches. A handsome fellow, a good dancer, and a fair violinist, Fiddler Paul was in demand at all festivities; but he was a shiftless drunkard, and it was whispered that he had a wife already in Lower Canada. Renaud very properly dismissed him when he came to urge his suit, but dismissed him in vain. Ninette, obedient in all else, would not give up her lover. The very day after her father had ordered him away, she promised to meet him in the woods just across the river. It was easy to arrange this, for she was a devout Catholic, and across the ice to the church was shorter than going around by the bridge. As she went through the snowy wood to the tryst, she noticed that a large grey dog was following. It seemed quite friendly, and the child (for she was still that) had no fear; but when she came to the place where Paul was waiting, the grey dog went forward, rumbling in its chest. Paul gave one look, knew it for a huge wolf, then fled like the coward he was. He afterwards said he ran for his gun. He must have forgotten where it was, as he climbed the nearest tree to find it. Meanwhile, Ninette ran home alone across the ice to tell Paul's friends of his danger. Not finding any firearms up the tree, the valiant lover made a spear by fastening his knife to a branch, and succeeded in giving Garou a painful wound on the head. The savage creature growled horribly, but thenceforth kept at a safe distance, though plainly showing his intention to wait till the man came down. But the approach of a band of rescuers changed his mind, and he went away growling.

Fiddler Paul found it easier to explain matters to Ninette than he would to anyone else. He still stood first in her affection, but so hopelessly ill with her father that he decided to elope with her as soon as he returned from Fort Alexander, whither he was to go for the Company as dog-driver. The Factor was very proud of his train dogs—three great Huskies with curly, bushy tails, big and strong as calves, but fierce and lawless as pirates. With these the Fiddler Paul was to drive to Fort Alexander from Fort Garry, the bearer of several important packets. He was an expert dog-driver, which usually means he was relentlessly cruel. He set off blithely in the morning down the river. He expected to be gone a week, and would then come back with twenty dollars in his pocket, and, having thus provided the sinews of war, would carry out the plan of elopement. Away they went down the river on the ice. The big dogs pulled swiftly but sulkily as he cracked the long whip and shouted: "*Allez, allez! marchez!*" They passed at speed by Renaud's shanty on the bank, and Paul waved his hand to Ninette as she stood by the door.

That evening the Huskies came back to Fort Garry. They were spattered with blood and were gashed in several places. But, strange to tell, they were quite "unhungry." Runners went on the back trail and recovered the packages. They were lying on the ice unharmed. Fragments of the sled were strewn for a mile or more up the river; not far from the packages were shreds of clothing that had belonged to the Fiddler.

It was quite clear the dogs had murdered and eaten their driver.

The Factor was terribly wrought up over the matter. It might cost him his dogs. He refused to believe the report, and set off to sift the evidence for himself. Renaud was chosen to go with him, and before they were within three miles of the fatal place, Renaud pointed to a very large track crossing from the east to the west bank of the river just after the dog-sled. He ran it backward for a mile or more on the eastern bank, noted how it had walked when the dogs walked, and run when they ran, before he turned to the Factor and said: "A beeg voolf—he follow ze sled all ze time."

Now they followed the track where it had crossed to the west shore. Two miles above Kildonan woods the wolf had stopped his gallop to walk over to the sled trail, followed it a few yards, then returned to the woods.

"Wriggling through the ring, flung his arms around the wolf's neck."

"Paul he drop somesin' here, ze packet maybe; ze voolf he come for smell. He follow so—now he know zat eez ze drunken Paul vot slash heem on ze head."

A mile farther, the wolf track came galloping on the ice behind the cariole. The man-track disappeared now, for the driver had leaped on the sled and lashed the dogs. Here is where he cut adrift the bundles. That is why things were scattered over the ice. See how the dogs were bounding under the lash. Here was the fiddler's knife in the snow. He must have dropped it in trying to use it on the wolf. And here—what? the wolf track disappears, but the sled track speeds along! The wolf has leaped on the sled. The dogs, in terror, added to their speed; but on the sleigh behind them there is a deed of vengeance done. In a moment it is over; both roll off the sled; the wolf track reappears on the east side to seek the woods. The sled swerves to the west bank, where, after half a mile, it is caught and wrecked on a root.

The snow also told Renaud how the dogs, entangled in the harness, had fought among themselves, had cut themselves loose, and trotting homeward by various ways up the

river, had gathered at the body of their late tyrant and devoured him at a meal.

Bad enough for the dogs ; still, they were cleared of the murder. That certainly was done by the wolf, and Renaud, after the shock of horror was past, gave a sigh of relief and added : " Eet is le Garou. He hab save my leel girl from zat Paul. He always was good to children."

* * * * *

This was the cause of the great final hunt that they fixed for Christmas Day just two years after the scene at the grave of Little Jim. It seemed as though all the dogs in the country were brought together. The three Huskies were there—there were Danes and trailers and a rabble of farm-dogs and nondescripts. A telephone message came that the trail of a large wolf had been seen near the Assiniboin woods west of the city, and an hour later the hunt was yelling on the hot scent of the Winnipeg wolf.

Away they went, a rabble of dogs, a motley rout of horsemen, a mob of men and boys on foot. Garou had no fear of the dogs, but men he knew had guns and were dangerous. He led off for the dark timber line of the Assiniboin, but the horsemen had open country, and they headed him back. He coursed along the Colony Creek hollow and so eluded the bullets already flying. He made for a barb-wire fence, and passing that, he got rid of the horsemen for a time, but still must keep the hollow that baffled the bullets. The dogs were all around him now, but none dared to close in. The horsemen were forced to take a distant way around, but now the chase was towards the town.

The wolf turned towards the slaughter-house, a familiar resort, and the shooting ceased on account of the houses, as well as the dogs, being so near. These were indeed now close enough to encircle him and hinder all further flight. He looked for a place to guard his rear for a final stand, and seeing a wooden footbridge over a gutter, he sprang in, there faced about, and held the pack at bay. The men got bars and demolished the bridge. He leaped out, knowing now that he had to die, but ready, and wishing only to make a worthy fight, and then for the first time in broad day view of all his foes he stood—the shadowy dog-killer, the disembodied voice of St. Boniface woods, the wonderful Winnipeg wolf.

At last, after three long years of fight, he stood before them alone, confronting two-score dogs, and men with guns to back them—but faced them just as resolutely as I saw him that day in the wintry woods. The same old curl was on his lips—the hard knit flanks heaved just a little, but his green and yellow eye glowed steadily. The dogs closed in, led not by the huge Huskies from the woods —they evidently knew too much for that—but by a bulldog from the town ; there was scuffling of many feet ; a low rumbling for a time replaced the yapping of the pack ; a flashing of those red and grizzled jaws, a momentary hurl back of the onset, and again he stood alone and braced, the grim and grand old bandit that he was. Three times they tried and suffered. Their boldest were lying about him. The first to go down was the bulldog. Learning wisdom now, the dogs held back, less sure, but his square-built chest showed never a sign of weakness yet, and after waiting impatiently, he advanced a few steps, and thus, alas ! gave to the gunners their long-expected chance. Three rifles rang, and in the snow Garou went down at last, his life of combat done.

He had made his choice. His days were short and crammed with quick events. His tale of many peaceful years was spent in three of daily brunt. He picked his trail, a new trail, high and short. He chose to drink his cup at a single gulp, and break the glass —but he left a deathless name.

Who can look into the mind of the wolf ? Who can show us his well-spring of motive ? Why should he still cling to a place of endless tribulation ? It could not be because he knew no other country, for the region is limitless, food is everywhere, and he was known at least as far as Selkirk. Nor could his motive be revenge. No animal will give up its whole life to seeking revenge : that evil kind of mind is found in man alone. The brute creation seeks for peace.

There is, then, but one remaining bond to chain him, and that the strongest claim that anything can own—the mightiest force on earth.

The wolf is gone. The last relic of him was lost in the burning Grammar School, but to this day the sexton of St. Boniface Church avers that the tolling bell on Christmas Eve never fails to provoke that weird and melancholy wolf cry from the wooded graveyard a hundred steps away, where they laid his Little Jim, the only being on earth that ever met him with the touch of love.

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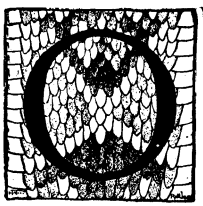
SIR BERTRAM'S TRYST.

By H. C. BAILEY.*



NCE on a time, three men-at-arms, Bertram, and John Bowlegs, and Denis the Gascon, plighted a faith that held firm as ever man's to maid. Full early Bertram and John Bowlegs buckled on the golden spurs of knighthood, but they stayed still firm friends to Denis, the man-at-arms, nor did he envy nor grudge their honour. Denis, too, in good time, was made knight. Hear how.

Denis fell in love. That is not matter for marvel. He had been in love two-score times since he was twelve. But this forty-first love was of a new kind. She was a little maid, slender as a birch-tree, and lithe. You might have guessed her a boy in coif and kirtle, save for the pale, golden hair that broke rippling from under that coif, and the dainty curve of her chin to her neck. Denis was wont to meet her under the oak that bounded her father's farm-holding by Oswestry.

Denis was a mighty man of war; and that is matter for marvel. He was short and slight, and seemed scarce to have the strength for wearing mail. But when swords shone and sang in the sunlight, Denis had the fire of ten men, and the strength of three in his arm. Once with three comrades on patrol, Denis had smitten sorely the riders of a certain renegade Norman, Percy de Vigne, though a dozen were set against four. This Percy de Vigne, a man I cannot love, had cast in his lot with Llywellyn of Wales, and from a tower in the hills above Llangollen rode forth and harried the border-side. It was a troop of his rascals, then, that Denis smote and had wounded Percy himself, when Sir Bertram coming up, charged them, and broke them and hunted them down. Only one or two, wounded and in evil case, had struggled back with their leader to the grey tower in the hills. So Percy de Vigne had a burning hate for Denis and Bertram both.

His spies were good. Soon he learnt that Denis met Enid at sunset under the oak, and was so pleased thereat that he spared his page a whipping. One night as Denis clasped the girl to his heart, and she, smiling, whispered: "Kiss my eyes, dear heart," she was torn from him as his lips touched her. Both man and maid were hurled to the ground and bound and gagged. Few moments passed ere they were tied on mountain ponies and trotting fast to Wales. This work Percy de Vigne's men knew.

Up through the firs in the fragrant summer twilight went the troop, and Denis groaned behind the gag. At his elbow rode Percy de Vigne, and laughed aloud at the man's agony. I cannot love Percy de Vigne. He made Enid's pony come level with Denis, and smoothed the girl's neck with his hand. "Sweetheart, sweetheart!" said he, watching Denis, and laughed at his tortured face.

Blue darkness fell over the pinewoods before they came to the tower on its crag of bare rock. The maid and the man were pulled to the ground and borne roughly in and up the narrow stair, and flung down on the stones in a big, low-roofed chamber. There, in the gloom, only two braziers of charcoal glimmered red, and Percy de Vigne cried: "Torches, fools!"

Then, in yellow, smoky light, Denis, all helpless, saw the chains and red, rusty staples, the greasy, oaken bed, and irons, pointed and blunt—the tools of the torturer's foul trade.

"Take away his gag," quoth Percy. "Now, fool, you may scream." And Denis, white of face, with his eyes bloodshot, drove his teeth into his underlip, bleeding from the gag. He could hear Enid moaning. "*Ventre d'enfer!* he will find his voice later," quoth Percy de Vigne. He came and stood across his captive. "My lord Denis needs one more to our pleasant company. You—it is well. Your leman—it is very well. Also I need that bully Bertram."

"And when he find thee, there will be a great vengeance!" cried Denis.

"Art a true prophet, good my lord Denis. A noble vengeance there shall be. And thou shalt see it. My lord Denis, too, shall bid him thither." And he called for parchment and pen and ink. "See, now, 'tis

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sweetly simple. Shalt write and say thou hast been sore hurt in a fall, and liest in a peasant's hut—dost pray him come to take thy last words to thy leman—for the love of God." Percy laughed, well pleased with himself. "'Twill work with the fool, that last." Denis set his teeth.

"Never!" he muttered.

"Oh, a stubborn spirit! Sear his cheek, Boris." Boris, a swarthy rogue, took an iron, red hot, from the brazier. "Wilt write, my lord Denis?" quoth Percy, laughing. Denis made no sound. Only Enid was moaning. Boris brought the iron very near. Then Percy de Vigne stayed him suddenly. "Nay, we may do better," he said, and laughed. "Take out the woman's gag," and roughly it was done. "Now, my lord Denis, let her sweet voice persuade! To the work, Boris—slow!" Nearer and nearer the red iron crept to the girl's white brow.

"Devil! The pen!" screamed Denis, and—

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Percy de Vigne. "Hold it so, Boris. Let him feast his eyes." He cut Denis's right arm loose from the bonds and gave him quill, parchment, and ink. "Write: 'Bertram—being stricken sore by a fall, I am come here, I think, to die.' You do think in truth, my lord Denis—— 'By our faith, I pray you come to me. There are words I would say to Enid.' Wilt say them, my lord Denis, ere you die. Sign!" And Denis, with the red iron scorching his love's eye, wrote to betray his friend to torture. But Enid made no cry. And the thing was written, and Denis was bound again ere the iron was moved from the girl. Then Percy mocked them both, and what he said it is not fit that I should write or you should read. Only be it writ that, when he turned at last and left them, laughing, the girl was crimson and shuddering with shame, and Denis writhing.

So they were left to think of the tortures that waited, and they could not come to each other, so strait were the bonds. The girl could hear him groan. At last, very low, he heard her voice.

"Dear—do not grieve so—dear, I'll not cry—not much, dear. Denis, if 'twas to be for thee, I am glad to be here." And still he groaned, for he had betrayed his friend, and not even his honour was left. "Denis, dear—with me——" her voice rose in a simple Latin prayer old Father Aloysius had taught her. "*Ave Maria gratia plena*——" and again she said it, and again.

Eight miles away, by a sweet-briar hedge in Oswestry town, Sir Bertram walked with the Lady Elinor, his love, most happy both in the August moonlight. The lady must needs know the bravest thing ever he had done, and would not be contented with his answer that he was bravest when he dared first to speak to her.

"But, faith! I was sore afraid," says he.

"Art far past fear now, Sir Tyrant," she whispered, for she was held very close.

"Love driveth out fear. Yet thee I honour and worship."

"And I thee, Bertram."

"Nay, dear heart——"

So they were talking, foolishly belike! certainly in a strain that had won vast scorn of Percy de Vigne. Yet one would rather be fool with Bertram than wise with Percy de Vigne.

Down the garden to them came a little man, running, breathless, and thrust at Bertram a parchment.

"Whence?" saith Bertram curtly. He was not best pleased.

"Am a cottar of Gobowen, lordship," said the little man. "Found a man-at-arms sore hurt on the hills. His hand of writ." Bertram read that broken, quavering writing and—

"Our Lady aid him! Sure, he is in ill case," he muttered; then turning, cried for his horse. His lady he drew aside: "Love, Denis is stricken sore and near to death. I must seek him."

"Aye; I grieve, Bertram."

"He is my dear friend," said Bertram. At that the little man in the shadow smiled; he had much scorn of Bertram and others who talked so.

So Bertram rode away in the moonlight with the sturdy little man hanging by his stirrup-leather. Once, twice, and again Bertram asked how far were they from Denis, and always was answered—

"My lord will be with him anon."

At last the path wound down through a dark defile. All on a sudden, Bertram felt the bite of a noose about his arms—another—another. Choked and blinded by a cloak about his head, he was dragged heavily from his horse and, struggling vainly, was bound and gagged. But it is upon record that one kick of his got home and sent a man straight to the hereafter.

Judge, then, how much marvelled his captors when they saw a man who could struggle so lose all his spirit once he was bound. He was tied, sitting like a woman, on a pony, and his head fell on his breast, his back drooped limply, he shook a quivering mass of flesh to

"And Denis, with the red iron scorching his love's eye, wrote to betray his friend to torture."

the pony's paces. And that poor pony found him mightily heavy, and, panting and sweating, could not break into a trot despite their blows. At gibes, at stripes—and both he had in plenty to bear—Bertram but grunted and swayed in the saddle.

Never, sure, was so wretched a captive. Not Denis, nor even Denis's maid, was the cause of so much wit in the riders of Percy de Vigne. They set forth the fate that waited him, with humorous phrase on the grilling of flesh and the crackling of joints. The passions of his companions and their plight were foretold with care and pains.

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Frank was the language of Percy's men, and they knew well the things whereof they spoke. If you would learn what devilry men can do, read in Fulke's *Præclarissimæ Historiæ*, for there 'tis all set down, and grisly is the tale. But Bertram swung on his pony like a sack and groaned and grunted.

So much he swayed, falling now on the pony's neck, now over his side, that the poor beast could go little more than the pace of a snail, and long and very long it was, and the moon had set, before they came to the tower of Percy de Vigne. Then fell work was there to carry Bertram, that huge knight, up the narrow stair. The sides of him grazed and scraped the stones. Head and feet were bruised against the walls. When at last the bearers had him in that low, dark chamber, they dropped him speedily, and he fell against the brazier and there lay, stupid, scorched by the red charcoal.

Torches and Percy de Vigne came in, and Denis saw his friend and started to his feet and fell again as the bonds constrained him, groaning—

"Bertram! Bertram!"

But Bertram lay with his back against the red coals and heard not nor moved.

Jollily laughed Percy de Vigne.

"A trinity, faith, a trinity!" and tore Bertram's gag away. The head swayed to this side and that at his violence, senseless. "See now, good my lord Bertram, to what a pleasant banquet hath your friend bidden you. Your friend!"

And Denis, prone on the floor, was sobbing now, for his pride was broken. So jollily laughed Percy de Vigne. "See, my lord! Hear, my lord!" he cried, and stirred Bertram with a rod of iron. But Bertram only moved like a dead thing to the blows. The air stank with the reek of his doublet burning against the brazier. "Bah, fools! have ye killed the fool?" cried Percy de Vigne. They surged forward to look and kick, but the man Boris brought a red iron from the other brazier and put it in Percy's hand and grinned. "Aye, *ventre d'enfer!* this should wake him," said Percy, and poised it and was going to plunge it in Bertram's face.

All bound as he was, Denis flung himself forward, and the iron slipped hissing down his shoulder and arm as he fell. With a foul oath, Percy de Vigne turned upon him—when lo! up from his very feet started Bertram, bound, indeed, still by the legs, but from his great arms he shook the bonds, burnt and charred, and hopped back, and shouted, full-voiced—

"*Maison du roy! Maison du roy!*"

The great brazier of red charcoal he tore from the ground and lifted high, and hurled it at them, and they sprang back and away pell-mell, stumbling, cursing under the rain of fire. A whistling blow of the empty brazier stretched Percy de Vigne on the stones, and snatching a red iron from the other brazier, Bertram fell on his chest and cried—

"Out, hounds, or I blind him!" And now it was Percy himself whose eyeball the red iron scorched. "Bid your hounds out, hound, out! Else——" closer and closer yet hovered the smoking iron, and Percy screamed—

"Away, fools, away! Out! Away! Out! Oh, my lord, 'twas but a jest. By the Virgin, I swear 'twas but a jest." The men stumbled to the door and there stood gazing.

"I also jest," quoth Bertram, and made the iron quiver a little, so that Percy de Vigne screamed. "Silence, hound! you offend the Lady Enid." With his left hand Bertram drew the glowing brazier nearer, and: "Waits another iron, hounds!" he said, over his shoulder. And they huddled together in the doorway, muttering, cursing.

Bertram, watching always the face of Percy de Vigne, and holding always the iron close, drew Percy's dagger with his left hand, and cut the bonds of his legs and rose stiffly. Then stuck the dagger under his arm, drew a fresh hot iron from the brazier, poised it over Percy's other eye, and put back the first to heat again. "It was growing cold, hound! Roll nearer, Denis." And Denis began to roll. But at that some of Percy's men started in. "*Feu d'enfer!* thieves, out!" roared Bertram, and let the red iron touch an instant. With very foul oaths, screaming, Percy bade them forth, and—

"Sure, Sir Bertram, I will let you go in all honour and peace. In peace and honour, good Sir Bertram," he whined. But Bertram made him no answer. Now Denis had rolled up to them, and Bertram, stooping an instant, sliced his bonds. "Shut the door, Denis; we would be alone," said Bertram.

Tottering, numb and stiff, Denis rose and stumbled to the door. The men swore at him, but durst no more, and the door was shut. "Irons, man, irons!" muttered Bertram; and Denis looked dazed an instant, then caught up two of the torture irons that were pointed, and drove them under the door, so that they held like wedges. Bertram changed to a new hot iron again, and: "Your lady now," he said quietly; and Denis sprang at her and cut her

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"They sprang back and away."

bonds, and kissed her and her hands and her feet, and chafed her poor numb limbs.

Now, all this while, Percy was whining out that he would let them go—with presents—with noble presents—would serve the King—would serve him well—would——

"All in good time," quoth Bertram. "Denis, man, at your leisure—thongs and a gag." So while for fear of the red iron Percy dared not cry, they bound him and gagged him even as he had done to them. Denis was something zealous to draw tight the thongs. Then Bertram put back his iron in the fire and drew a long breath.

"Faith! lady, I grieve that I had that to do before your eyes. I grieve also that a while I must ask you to wait here." She

ran to him and caught his hand and kissed it. "Why will you shame me?" says he laughing, and gently put her by. He took up the torturer's mallet, and swinging it on high, drave tighter the wedges under the door.

"Ah, Sir Bertram, but for you——"

"Now, is it like that I am grieved to be here?" says Bertram, with his deep laugh. But Denis sat apart, with his head on his hands: he remembered the letter and was ashamed. Now, that letter it seemed that Bertram had forgotten altogether. He fetched a block to the door, and drew Percy de Vigne's sword, and sat himself down and dandled the blade; and ever he chuckled, for he saw much humour in the matter.

"What do we do, Bertram?" said Denis at last.

"We await the deeds of Bedivere," quoth Bertram, and chuckled again.

"Bedivere?" cried Enid.

"My good horse," said Bertram. "Him they did not capture."

For Sir Bertram, falling, had let go his bridle-rein. Bedivere, rearing, had turned, and Bertram heard the sound of his galloping hoofs—wherefore Bertram resolved that whoever had caught him should not slay him speedily. Hence that slow ride.

Fast Bedivere galloped back and came to the door of Sir Bertram's quarters and whinnied loud. Out came Bertram's squire Arthur, and caught the bridle and swore aloud; felt the hot, heaving sides, muttered: "A two-mile gallop. Three haply." Shouted then within to the men-at-arms: "Saddle, saddle! Sir Bertram is taken!" then vaulted on Bedivere and galloped off to the quarters of Sir John of Netherby—he that was John Bowlegs. Now, Sir John, who went early to bed, was just roused to hear the plaint of a yeoman that his daughter was carried away by the Welsh, and Sir John came waddling in, in his bedgown, to Enid's father and Arthur the squire.

Scarce were the two brief stories told when Sir John puts his head out of window and shouts: "Trumpets! Ho, rogues! trumpets! Sound to horse! Kick me up a two-score bowmen! Hubert, my breeches!—Dick, the mail! Fetch me Stephen Armstrong, Arthur, lad. Off he waddled to his breeches, while the blare of the trumpets sounded in the street, and the men-at-arms came running out, buckling their mail as they ran.

Mark them soon moving off into the night, mounted men three-score, bowmen a score hanging to the stirrup-leathers, and in front a long, lean man running behind a dog in leash. Stephen Armstrong the border tracker and his lurcher Curtail were on Bedivere's first trail. Or ever a knight came galloping from the King's pavilion beyond the town to learn why the trumpets blared, Stephen Armstrong was a mile away.

And the Lady Elinor sat at her window, gazing wide-eyed into the blue darkness. And the King, when the tale was told him, swore by Our Lady of Walsingham he would hang Percy de Vigne and all his men if Bertram were scathed. Which was not much to the purpose; but the King was choleric. Then the King bade send riders to keep close with Sir John's force, and a string of riders to bear back news from moment to moment. Which was very much to the purpose, for the King was a great soldier.

It needs not tell how Curtail the lurcher came to the place where Bertram was surprised and ran round in a circle; nor how Stephen Armstrong saw the dead man and gave one look and said "De Vigne's!" and ran on in the dark.

Go back now to the torture-room, where Bertram sits dandling a sword and smiling to himself; where Denis sits with Enid's hand in his arm, distraught, ashamed.

"Bertram," says Denis at last in a low voice.

"Aye?"

"'Twas I wrote that letter."

"And glad of it I am," said Bertram lightly.

"For fear of torture—brought you to torture——"

"Ah, Denis!" cried the girl. "Sir Bertram, 'twas I that they were to torture, and 'twas fear for me. Ah, Sir Bertram, I am ashamed; but—but—truly 'twas over-hard——" Bertram came and gripped Denis's hand.

"Denis, what man dare blame?" he said. "Not I, faith! nor any man that hath loved." Then he laughed. "*Pardi*, what hurt have I? And——" Some sound came from without—the dull tramp of feet, the clatter of steel. Bertram ran to the narrow slit that served for window. The crag was alive with men. The whicker of arrows sounded soft and clear.

"*Maison du roy!*" roared Bertram.

"*De par le roy!*" came an answering shout, and in a moment he heard the crash of axes on the door of the tower.

Rose the wild cries of a fight. "Bowmen, bowmen! Roundly all! Strike! Strike!"

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and the thunder and crash of the blows on the door.

Then came some who rapped at that torture-room, screaming: "My lord, what is to do? My lord!" but Percy de Vigne could make no sound.

"'Twere better had you asked earlier," quoth Bertram coolly, and tried the weight of the sword. They beat upon the panels without; they flung themselves at the door, and it yielded. Bertram put the sword in Denis's hand. "'Tis over-light!" said he, and took two red irons from the brazier. "Lady, your pardon. Look from the window," said he. Torn from the hinges, the door burst inward, and the irons and the sword fell to work with a shout: "*Maison du roy!*" and the long irons kept the threshold clear: who dodged beneath them met Denis, and Denis had his honour to win again. And soon up the stair came shouting the men of the King's House, and Percy de Vigne's men were driven up to their death.

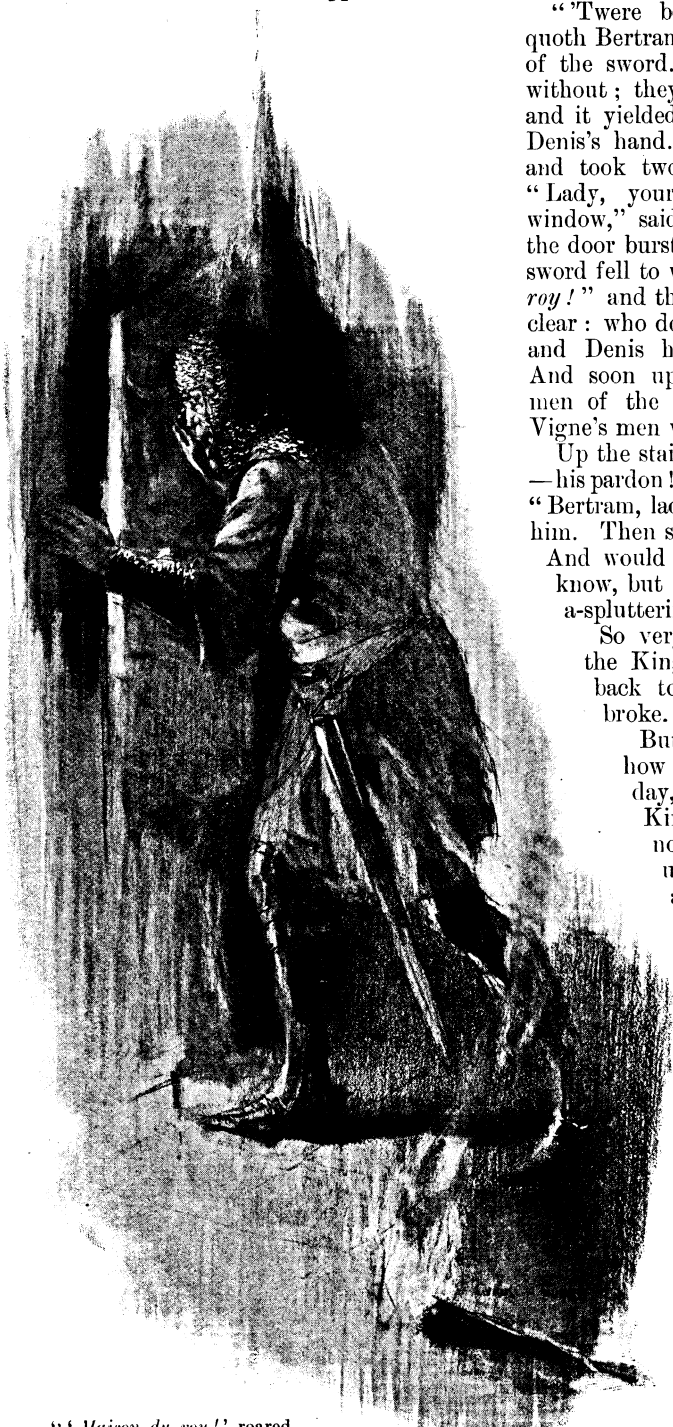
Up the stair came waddling John Bowlegs—his pardon! Sir John of Netherby—crying: "Bertram, lad, Bertram!" and fairly hugged him. Then saw Denis, and hugged him too. And would have hugged Enid for what I know, but he saw Percy de Vigne and fell a-spluttering with laughter.

So very gaily, chanting the song of the King's House, the company came back to Oswestry town as the dawn broke.

But I remember I have not told how Denis was made knight. That day, when the sun was setting, the King held a Court—so that day nor Denis and Enid might be under the oak-tree, nor Bertram and Elinor by the sweet-briar hedge. The King must needs have them all and hear their story. Then Denis flushed and hung his head, and Enid blushed and looked away. With his eyes turned to the ground, Denis bluntly told his tale; had come to Percy's order for the letter when——

"By your good leave, my lord, now comes my part," quoth Bertram, stepping forward. "Even under threat of torment, write he would not. So this rascal Percy writes a note in a quavering, broken hand, and 'twas brought to me. The rest is little matter."

"Little matter!" quoth the King, laughing. "Faith!



"'*Maison du roy!*' roared Bertram."

the best is to come." But Denis looked at Bertram and could not speak. Enid smiled at Bertram, and she, with a curtsy to the King, told his deeds.

"Nay, lady, much you make of little!" cried Bertram soon.

"If this be little, save me from his much!" cried the King. And Bertram, seeing him in happy temper, knelt and said—

"My lord, a boon! Twice Denis saved me. Once from the red iron. Once in the fight at the doorway. Pray you, my lord, pay him." And the Lady Elinor came forward and curtsied low.

"My lord, I pray you. For so Denis, daring, saved my love." The King sprang up.

"By 'r Lady of Walsingham, never with better heart!" he cried. And there, before all the Court, made Denis knight.

But afterward Denis and Enid came to Bertram and Elinor, and—

"Lady, to you, what he would not tell, we must," said Denis. "Bertram would not shame me, but I am shamed." And so he told the true story, while Elinor listened with misty eyes. "Now, lady, you will know how to think of me," said Denis at last and turned sadly away. Enid and he were going, when Elinor cried—

"Sir Denis!" and caught his hand and Enid's. "My friends, my friends, how can I blame?" she said softly. "Ah, Sir Denis! is it not better so? And now surely we must thank God and Our Lady."

"For Sir Bertram," said Enid, and a light came in Elinor's eyes.

"Aye," she said very low.

"For a little matter, then, *pardi!*" cried Bertram, laughing. Elinor turned, looked smiling up at him as he stood square, broad of shoulder and mighty of limb.

"In truth, you are not a little matter, my lord," said she, with a soft laugh, happy.

A LITTLE MORE.

A LITTLE more, and how much more it is,
The last long mile that makes the journey's end;
The little hour 'twixt setting sun and night
The little word that lover makes of friend.

A little less, and yet how far behind
Seems the dread danger that had passed so near;
The little climb that missed the goal half-won,
The little silence that had saved the tear.

A little while, and we must surely know
The whys and wherefores that we now but guess;
And see, as on God's map of life beneath,
Where lead the roads "A little More or Less."

CHARLES FFOULKES.

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BOBBIE: May Johnny Shocker come in and play with me?

MOTHER: No—you make too much noise. You can go and play in *his* house instead.

"THEY have named a brand of cigars after Barker."

"I should consider that quite complimentary."

"You wouldn't if you knew the cigars."

MCFADDEN: If Oi should iver die suddenly, Oi hope they'll hold wan av thim autopsies over me body.

BRANIGAN: And why?

MCFADDEN: So that Oi kin know the cause av me death, you chump!

"I WONDER," said the actress, "who could have sent me those beautiful flowers?"

"I didn't know you cared about that part of it, so long as I paid the bill," answered the patient manager. "But I'll send around and get the florist's name."

AT THE ACADEMY.

HE: A Botticelli, I should say.

SHE: Oh, no; the catalogue calls it "An Allegory."

LADY: I hear you've got a very industrious wife.

LAUNDRYMAN: Yes, mum; she's always finding something for me to do.

MR. GREYNECK: Why, Johnny, what makes you feel so bad?

JOHNNY: Boo-hoo! Grandpa just fell down on the we-wet walk and got his clothes all mud!

MR. GREYNECK: I am glad, my child, to find you kind-hearted and sympathetic.

JOHNNY: Ye-ye-yes, and sister saw him and I—I didn't!

HE: I notice you have discarded all finery of late.

SHE: Yes; you see, mother told me that ribbons and laces were dragging me down to perdition, so I gave them to my sister.

"No," said Mr. Bliggins; "I haven't any use for philosophers."

"Why not?"

"My idea of a philosopher is a man who pretends he enjoys hard luck."

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THE POINT OF VIEW.

NIECE (to Scotch uncle, who has attended English Service for first time): Well, uncle, how do you like our Service?

UNCLE: Oh, well enough—but it's an awfu' wey tae spen' the Sawbath!

THE PHILOSOPHICAL EARWIG.

THE Earwig sat down on a broad lettuce leaf—
A philosopher grave was he—
And the point that he pondered (and pondered with grief)
Was the Things that Ought Never to Be.
"Oh, I can't understand the ways of the world,"
Was the soul of his constant complaint,
"For what is the use of a brush to a Fox
When he's never been taught how to paint?
And what is the sense of a pen for a Pig,
When he can't write a line, I declare?
And what is the good of a comb to a Cock,
When he never has grown any hair?

"And why should the Stairs have a foot, and no leg?
(I really *can't* get over that!)
And why shouldn't the Things that Come under one Head
In cold weather put on a hat?
Why is it the Cricket will never play ball,
And the Grasshopper don't brew his hops?
And why does the Axe never ask to have bread
Or potatoes along with its chops?
And why mayn't the Dog sail the sea in his bark?
Or the Kangaroo publish his tail?
And if she can never put on her new kids,
What do they the poor Goat avail?

"Why doesn't the Elephant lock up his trunk?
Or the Sun build a house with its beams?
And why does the Door never eat up its jamb?
So wasteful to *keep* it it seems!
And why does the Turkey that's dead never smile,
When a Merry Thought's still in its breast?
And why——" He stopped short: he'd been seized by a hen,
And nobody e'er heard the rest!

Hazel Phillips Hanshew.

FATHER: Really, my boy, you ought to devote more of your time to the study of modern languages. Why, when I was your age, I could speak French as well as I can now.

SON (who has no very high opinion of his father's linguistic ability): I can quite believe that.

CYRUS: Well, Seth, an' haow's business?

SETH: Pretty bad—as I says tew my ole mule this morning, when I was feedin' him. I says: "It's a good job fer yew thet yew ain't a camel, fer thet's the last straw."

PROPERTY PRIDE.

"It's like this, sir. He ain't short-sighted, but those spectacles belonged to his grandma, and we think it a pity to see 'em wasted."

YOU NEVER CAN TELL.

SHE: Well, have you ever proposed to anyone?

HE: No, I'm not fool enough to propose to anyone who would be fool enough to marry me, and there's no use proposing to the others, is there?

HAWKE (sententiously): Believe me, my boy, honesty is the best policy.

BLUMER: Why don't you practise what you preach?

HAWKE: So I do. You never caught me telling a lie.

BLUMER: No—you're too jolly artful.

"GOOD morrow, Mrs. Moloney. Will ye kindly give me a lend of your spade?"

"Certainly, Pat. What do you want it for?"

"Mike's in the bog, and I want to dig him out."

"How far is he in?" "Up to his heels."

"Why, then, can't ye lift him out?"

"Because he's the wrong way up, faith!"

SHE: He bored me awfully, but I don't think I showed it. Every time I yawned I hid it with my hand.

HE (trying to be gallant): Really, I don't see how so small a hand could hide—er, that is, isn't it beastly weather?

FAMILY PHYSICIAN: Yes, madam, it's really remarkable how quickly children respond to our remedies; and your little boy is so bright that he can be trusted to take them himself.

PROUD MOTHER: Yes, indeed. Tell the doctor, dear, how you used the pills that gave you such bright, rosy cheeks, Tommy.

TOMMY: I—I— just put 'em in my little gun, an' shot the little sparrows wif 'em.

FELICE: The diamond in this engagement-ring is awfully small.

HENRY: I told the jeweller it was for the smallest hand in all England.

NORA: Is Moike goin' t' th' funeral?

BRIDGET: Indade he isn't.

NORA: An' whoy?

BRIDGET: Shure he wuz at th' wake lasht noight.

MISFORTUNE is a blessing so well disguised that sometimes we have to wake in another world to know it.

IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST.

"YES, Miss Brown, our club's been whacked every match, so far; an' it's all through you. There's four of our best men taking no interest in the game because they admire you so awfully. I suppose you couldn't get your mother to take you away a bit until the cricket season's over?"

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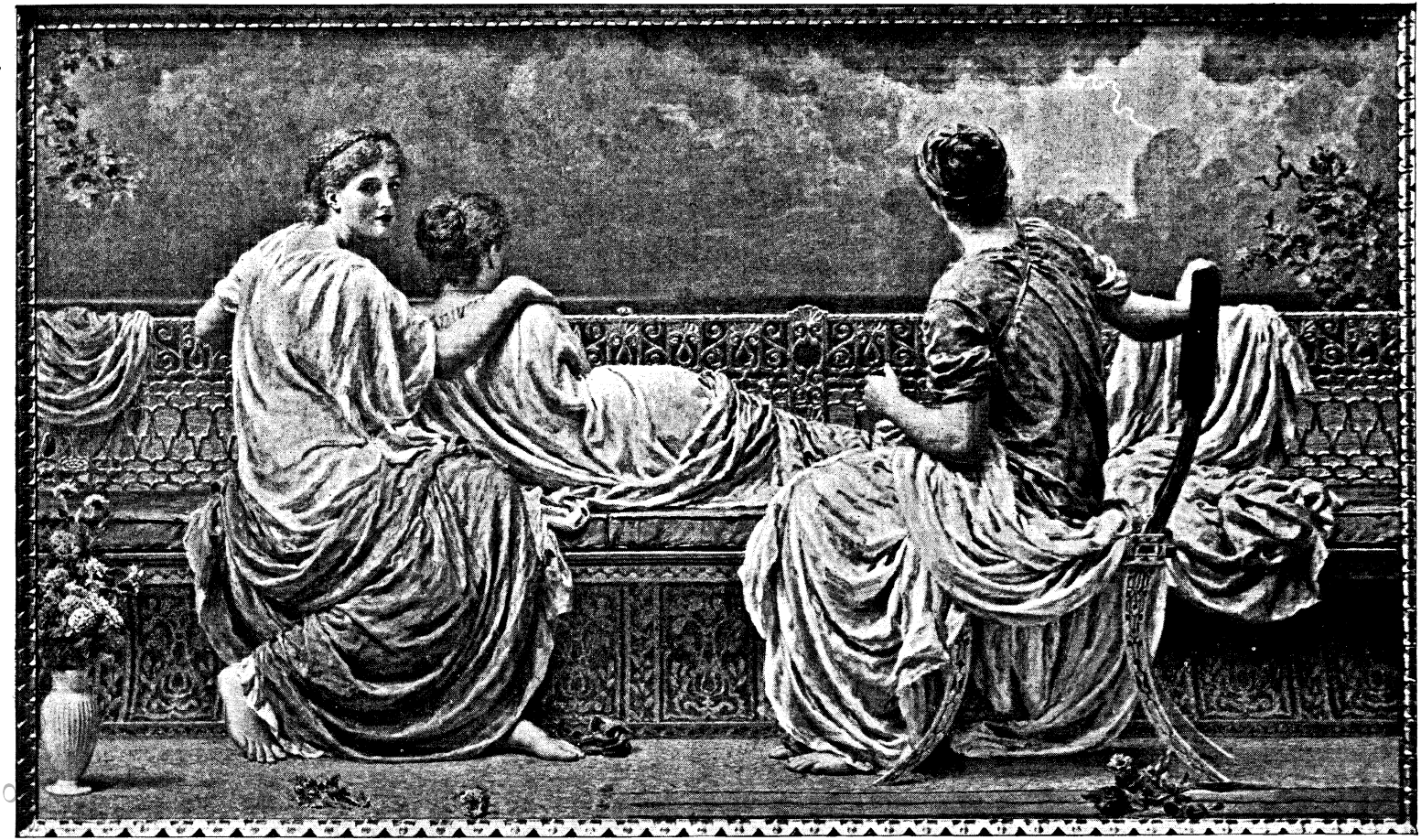

"LIGHTNING AND LIGHT." BY ALBERT MOORE.

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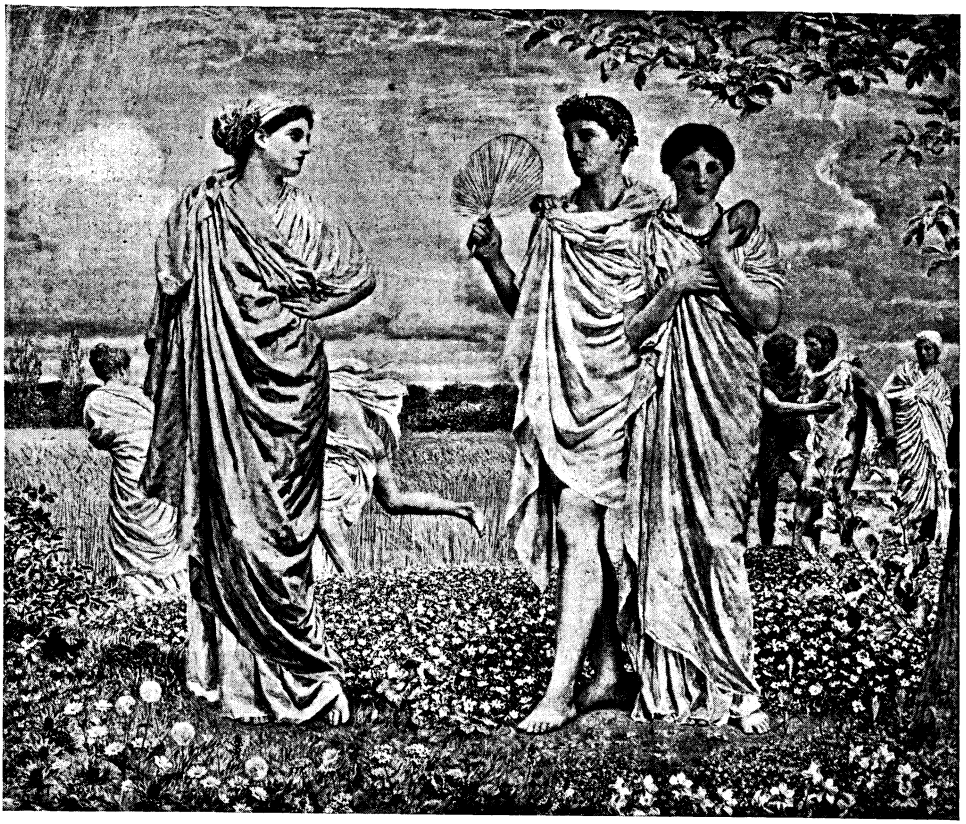

"THE LOVES OF THE WINDS AND THE SEASONS." BY ALBERT MOORE.
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THE ART OF ALBERT MOORE.

BY AUSTIN CHESTER.

PROBABLY there is no work of any modern painter that, to the ordinary, non-critical eye—the eye untrained to a nice discrimination of subtle tone—so surely commends itself, as suitable to reproduction in black-and-white, as does that of Albert Moore.

And this pronouncement would, to the painter himself, have been a not unwelcome criticism on his life's work, inasmuch as it would have been a recognition that he had not fallen far short in his efforts to attain that at which he aimed—which was to produce on canvas work which, had it been sculptured in marble, would have challenged—and not always to his disadvantage—comparison with that of the sculptors of ancient Greece.

Sculpture, in the procession of the Fine Arts, coming next as it does to Architecture, must be accounted as equally decorative; and as the work of Albert Moore in colour might, with propriety, have been expressed in marble, it is therefore describable but by the epithet, decorative—one thrown frequently at it as opprobrious. But he made it so of deliberate intent, his work being distinguishable by the endeavour—rarely unsuccessful—to reproduce in paint the Greek ideals of beauty, which are familiar to us in the colder medium, and which are of a certain sensuous type, since painters and sculptors glorify that which ascetics profess to ignore, but a type entirely free from any trace of sensuality.

Imbued with the feeling that the essential property of sculpture is repose, Albert Moore frequently sought to reach this quality in

"THE END OF THE STORY." BY ALBERT MOORE.
Reproduced from a photograph by Messrs. Henry Dixon and Sons, Albany Street, N.W.

the portrayal of the boundary which is but a narrow division between the state of death and life—sleep; and he made a successful endeavour always to suppress in his work all traces of emotionalism, a happy discretion eliminating from his pictures the unworthy elements of triviality and modernity which tend to destroy the purity of almost all contemporaneous art. That his pictures were without subject; that they showed scarcely a minimum of human feeling; that he failed to tell harrowing or amusing stories on his canvases, and omitted to deal with everyday affairs, thus avoiding the pernicious influence of ephemeral incident, a tendency deprecated by Lord Leighton in his commentaries upon the modern French or Newlyn schools, was a source of offence to many critics. Certainly the "They paint platitudes!" which the late President of the Royal Academy cast as a reproach at members of the little colony, whose clever work has since found popular recognition, could never have been applied to the art of Albert Moore. He strove after form for form's sake, and, to attain it, evolved a scheme of geometric pedantry, to which is probably to be attributed the grace of arrangement which is never absent from, and indeed is the chief characteristic of, his work.

It is no exaggeration to say that his pictures are mathematical problems constructed on a pattern, a very network of symmetric lines; and, were it possible to eliminate the figures from the canvases, there would yet remain, not only traceable but distinct and easy to be followed, the scientific system on which they are constructed, and within which elaborate framework he set himself the task of expounding his philosophy of the beautiful. Nothing in his pictures was put in without intent; each flower, cushion, piece of drapery, every apparently trivial detail had its exact place and well-defined purpose to serve in the design of the mosaic as a whole.

How completely successful such a method can be—for, according to Socrates, to measure the beautiful is to measure chalk by a white line—or how far it is possible to preserve in colour the chastity of the classic, are questions outside the province of this article, which purports, in the limited space allowed by a few pages, but to give the chief points in

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the aims and in the career of a man whose work, in the latter part of the last century, raised round it a controversy little less bitter than that which waged so furiously round the genius of James McNeil Whistler. But it is interesting to note how deliberately Albert Moore denied in his work the promptings of his own nature, which was both ardent and emotional, and would have led him, had he followed it, to have become, like Rubens, the delineator of materialistic beauty, instead of the portrayer of that which is cold and classic.

In the preface of the very able book on Albert Moore's work, written by Mr. Alfred Lys Baldry, the writer says: "People generally have failed to appreciate the real significance of his pictures, or to understand clearly his aims and motives, because they have failed to see more than the superficial intention in what he did. In looking at his work, they have missed the very essentials which gave to that work its claim to be regarded from a more serious and thoughtful standpoint than the merely ephemeral productions of the painter of current events."

"THE LOVERS." BY ALBERT MOORE.

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Albert Moore preached the evangel of the æsthetic law of loveliness, and when,

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"FOLLOW MY LEADER." BY ALBERT MOORE.

Reproduced from the plate of the Autotype Company, 74, New Oxford Street, W.

many years ago, Mr. Sidney Colvin wrote of him as of a man with a "special theoretical conviction, a set of doctrines as to what are and what are not the proper aims of the painter," adding: "He has never swerved from his habit, right or wrong, of making the decorative aspect of his canvas, regarded as an arrangement of beautiful lines and refreshing colours, the one important matter in his work," he touched the very pith and kernel of this artist's aims. For Albert Moore set himself the task of working out, with extraordinary care and exactness, a form of procedure which only a very self-denying and painstaking nature could have followed.

He founded, upon the practices of the Greeks, a scheme of performance which seemed to him to afford the surest basis for success; leaving nothing to chance, he depended for his results upon intelligent technicality and exact treatment.

He was, again to quote Mr. Baldry, "a man of method, an assiduous follower of an exact system, a sincere believer in rational principles; but he never became mechanical. He was a realist, and worked on simple, technical lines, but his realism never degenerated into unselected literalism, and his technical simplicity never led him into crudities nor into bald inexpressiveness. He began and ended—a student, a learner."

"BLOSSOMS."

From the picture by Albert Moore in the Tate Gallery.

Reproduced from the plate of the Autotype Company, 74, New Oxford Street, W.

To say that Albert Moore was a pre-Raphaelite, in which words he is often described, is to leave him tethered within too small a space—one from which we are unable to disassociate the highly spiritual and sacred. We are, many of us, born out of our age; and Albert Moore would probably have found his right environment in ancient Athens as a student under the guidance of Phideas.

Giotto may, with some truth, be taken as the painter from whom Albert Moore set himself deliberately to retrograde; for as Giotto, in his turn departing from the antique, laid the foundation for the work of the Renaissance, and gave to art the vitality it was in his time lacking, by humanising the mysteries of faith and bringing them into communion with human feelings—catching transient shades of emotion to express them by posture of body and play of feature—so, denying emotionalism as an attribute of art, did Albert Moore return to the stern tenets of the Hellenic period by a fastidious

and scrupulous shunning of the human interest and the commonplace.

Just, too, as Giotto's first essay in drawing can be chosen as illustrative of his bent of mind—his being found as a child on the open mountain trying to draw portraits of the members of the flock committed to his care—so can an early incident in the life of Albert Moore be taken as a parallel by which we can translate his adoration of the order of design—his instinct for the decorative. One day, when only just able to run alone,

"SEA-GULLS." BY ALBERT MOORE.

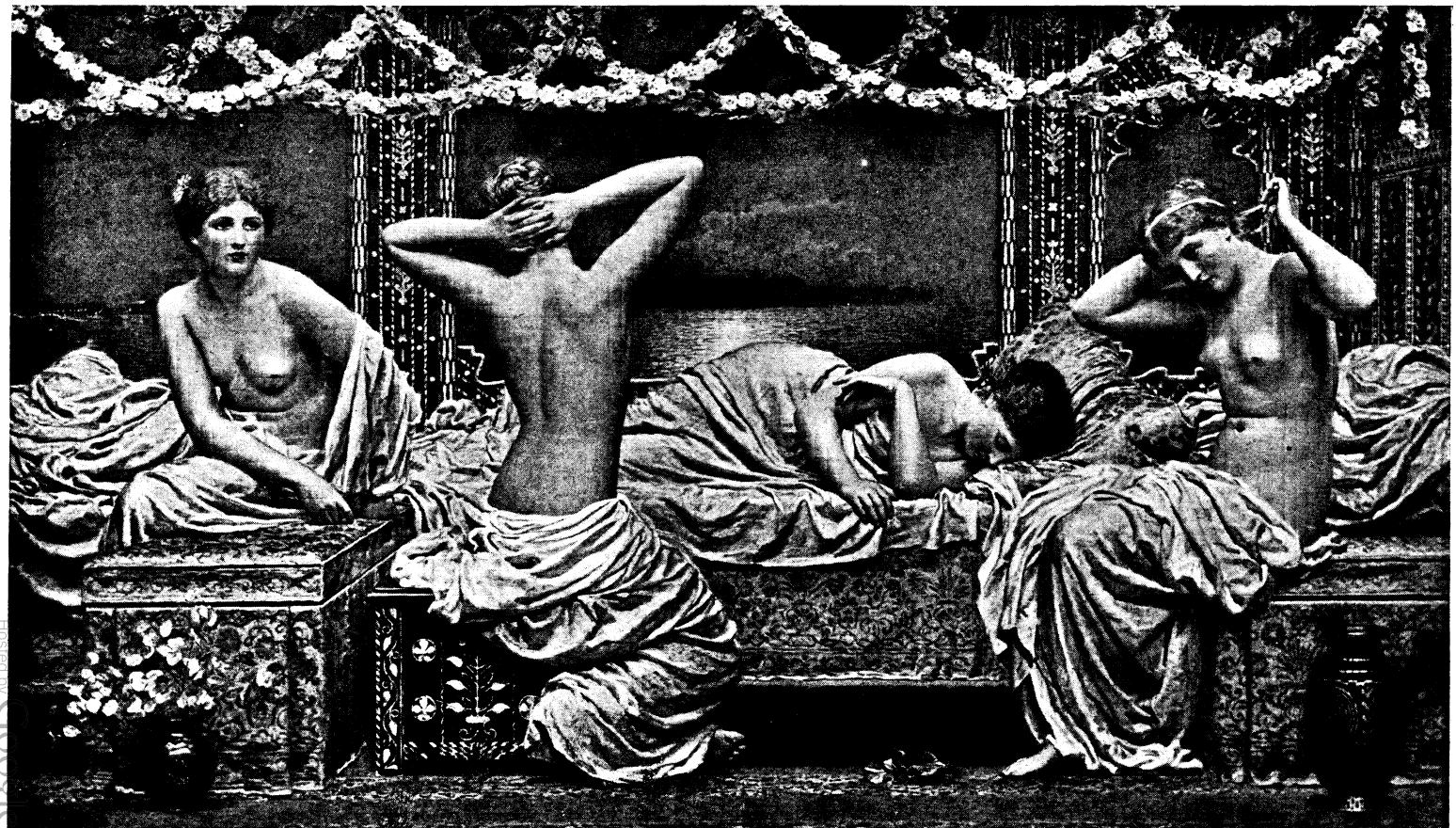
Reproduced from a photograph by L. Caswall Smith, Gainsborough Studio, Oxford Street, W.

"SEA-SHELLS." BY ALBERT MOORE.

Reproduced from a photograph by L. Caswall Smith, Gainsborough Studio, Oxford Street, W.

he was taken by his parents to visit a large nursery-garden at York, where, being missed, he, after some search, was found on his knees on one of the flower-beds, "with his arms clasped in ecstasy round the stem of a tall lily—which position he could not, without some trouble, be induced to abandon."

The broad outlines of the career of Albert Moore, briefly stated, show him the youngest child of a family of fourteen. An inheritance of artistic capacity came to him through both father and mother, his father being a portrait-



"A SUMMER NIGHT." BY ALBERT MOORE.

From the original in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. Reproduced by permission of the Liverpool Corporation.

painter of high repute in the north of England, whilst his mother, nearly related to Richard Hilton, one of the most capable of the earlier Royal Academicians, was cousin to the mother of Sir John Millais, and a connection also of Henry Calvert, the animal-painter.

To believers in heredity it is quite intelligible that, with such a parentage, Albert Moore should, like his two elder brothers, the late John Collingham Moore and the late Henry Moore, R.A., have possessed not only a bias towards art, but capacity much beyond the average; and as he began very early to show signs of the great powers which made his after career remarkable, there was naturally no question of his adopting any other than the artistic profession.

But it was the artistic temperament which was his inheritance, rather than the special medium of paint; for it is more than probable that had he, in his infancy, been surrounded by the rulers, compasses, and scales employed by architects, he would have erected for himself, in more permanent material, monuments of his magnificent ability; or had he been placed in literary environment, that we should have acclaimed in him a poet is shown in the talent displayed in the little poem which he called the "Portrait of a Mouth"—

Gentle of mien, perhaps a little small,
With changing curves—a charm is in them all—
And softly wrought in deepest coral hue,
It would, like scarce-closed casket, leave in view
Its pearls, but for a gesture prim and wise
Of little mother, which it quaintly tries.

But markest thou a quiv'ring movement there?
Behind those lips 'tis Eros doth prepare
His bow; and as thou gazest while they part,
He gleams upon thee and hath pierced thy heart.

"JASMINE." BY ALBERT MOORE.

Reproduced from a photograph by Messrs. Henry Dixon and Sons, Albany Street, N.W.

He was actually making his first efforts in artistic practice at an age when most children show little interest in subjects other than their toys.

By the time he was four years old he was following a systematic and intelligent course of working from natural objects, and long before he could read or write he exhibited a quite respectable proficiency in drawing.

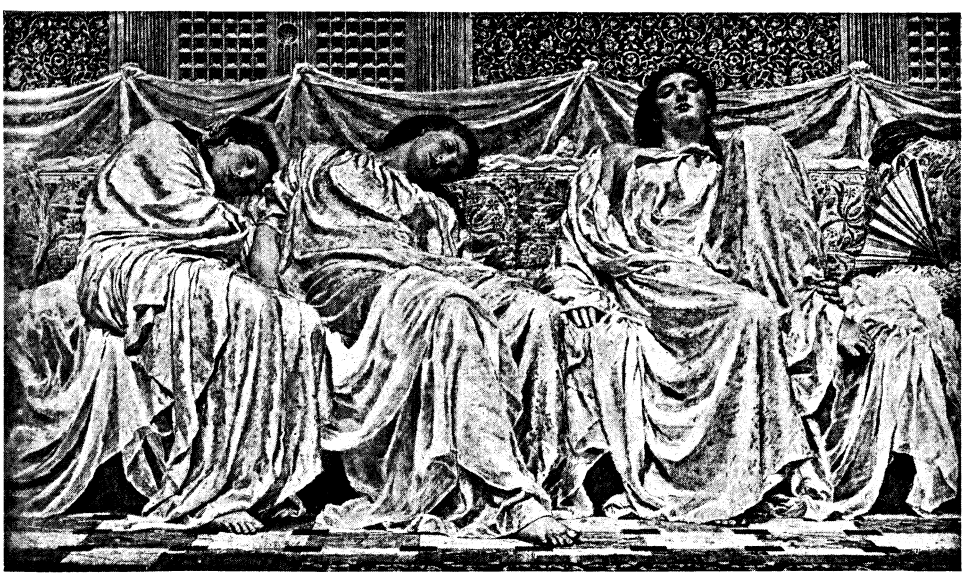
He brought, it is said, his early efforts for criticism to those of his elders who might be available for that purpose; but the criticism he obtained must have been according to his views, even in those early days, for him to accept it; for at four and five years old he was as apt to pit his own opinions against those of others as when, in the latter years of his life, the sincerity of his beliefs, and his adherence to them, made of him a pariah from the conventions of his contemporaries. For there can be no doubt that his critical

"READING ALOUD." BY ALBERT MOORE.
Reproduced from the plate by Messrs. C. W. Faulkner and Co., Golden Lane, E.C.

inclination to dogmatise on matters of opinion, and to assert too vehemently his personal predilections for a particular class of art, had a great deal to do with the inconsiderate treatment of his own work by not only the men who wrote about it, but by those who were in a position to give it, had they chosen to do so, official acknowledgment.

One of the minor points which brought upon him condemnation was his disregard of a title as a necessary complement of a picture. This departure from a convention which turns the catalogues of modern exhibitions into an entertaining book, compiled of literary extracts and suggestive platitudes, was a source of unreasoning annoyance to both public and critics.

There are many men, so-called art patrons, who desire to have a label attached to a work they may purchase. Such a man, so the story goes, came once to Albert Moore,



"THE DREAMERS." BY ALBERT MOORE.
From the original in the Birmingham Art Gallery. Reproduced by permission of the Birmingham Art Gallery Committee.

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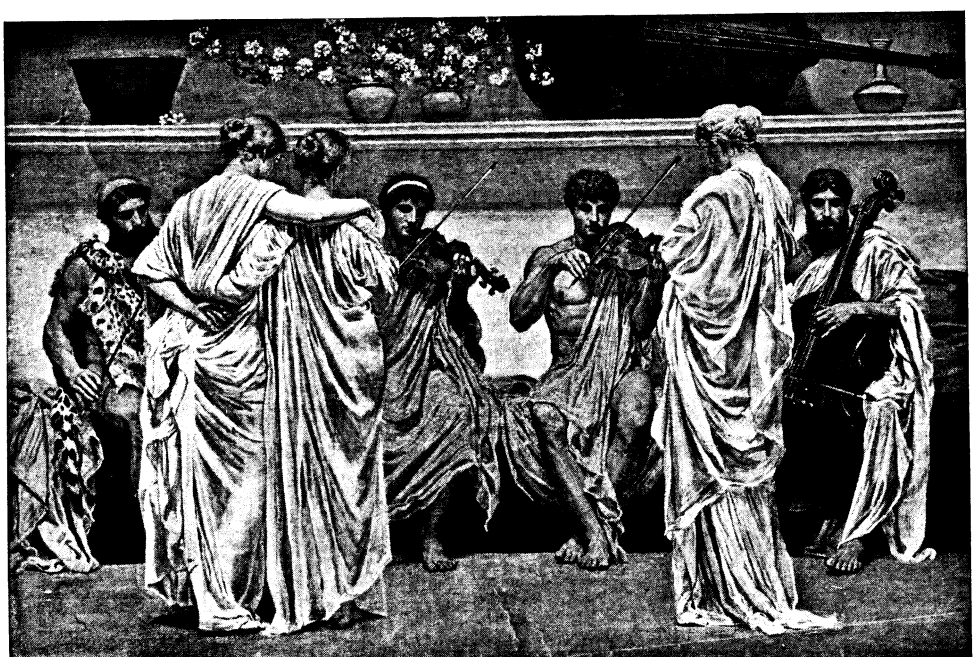
STUDY FOR ONE OF THE FIGURES IN "MIDSUMMER." BY ALBERT MOORE.
Reproduced from a photograph by F. Hollyer, Pembroke Square, W.

and seeing on the easel a picture on which he was at that time engaged, agreed to purchase it. When it was finished, the patron returned, admired, and approved. It occurred to him, however, to ask the question, to him most important: "What do you call it?" The answer, given with all the artist's cheerful indifference and characteristic abruptness: "You may call it what you like!" shocked him with a suggestion of absolute impropriety. He felt all at once that he had been defrauded. Here was a picture, important in scale, beautiful in colour, painted by a man who, he had been told, was a master of artistic craft, and to be paid for with the full contents of a well-lined purse; and yet the painter did not know what it was all about. It was inconceivable, and must necessarily imply something wrong! Then and there he wished to repudiate the bargain. To buy a picture without a name was a thing he had never done before; and he felt that he was not getting anything like his money's worth. It was only by strategy on the part of the artist that his scruples were at last quieted, and that he could be induced—still exercised in his mind—to depart with the canvas.

"And," adds Mr. Baldry, "doubtless ever after he (the purchaser) felt towards that picture much as he would have towards some human waif about whose origin there were doubts, and whose pedigree was incomplete—despising it as a nameless thing



"THE QUARTETTE." BY ALBERT MOORE.
Reproduced from a photograph by Messrs. Henry Dixon and Sons, Albany Street, N.W.

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"MIDSUMMER." BY ALBERT MOORE.

Reproduced from the plate published by Messrs. Hildesheimer and Co., Clerkenwell Road, E.C.

brought into existence under rather discreditable circumstances."

We have the authority of Ruskin for calling Albert Moore a great colourist; and that he saw himself as such, and revealed this knowledge to the seeing eye, is recognisable not only by Ruskin's opinion, but by a story told by one of his own pupils, who, having been set the task to paint some drapery of subtle tones, accomplished it in a way he considered to be excessively creditable. "Dear me!" said Albert Moore; "and do you really see it like that? Why, you have missed some twenty different shades of colour. Put the canvas aside for a month, and when your eyes have learnt to see what is before them, you had better take it up again." The month's study, under the guidance of the master, revealed to the pupil, if not the twenty different tones, at least a considerable number, which he had failed to put in.

Mr. Ruskin, in his Notes on the Royal Academy of 1875, speaking of Albert Moore as a colourist, taking the "Flower Walk" as his illustration, said: "Look at the blue reflection on the chin of this figure, at the reflection of the warm brick wall on its right

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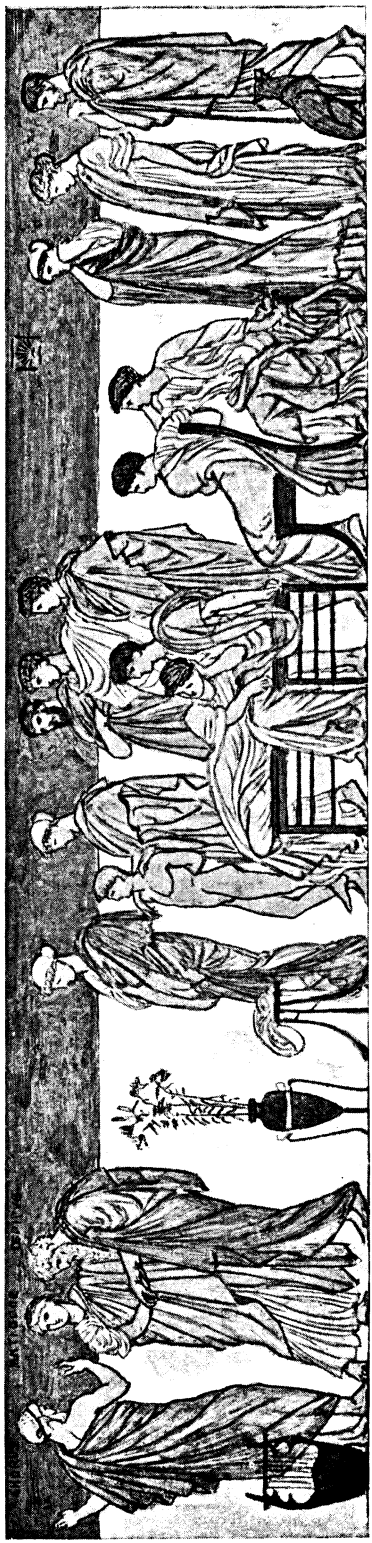


STUDY FOR A CLASSICAL FRIEZE. BY ALBERT MOORE.
Reproduced from a photograph by F. Hollyer, Pembroke Square, W.

arm ; and at the general modes of unaffected relief by which the extended left arm in 'Pansies' (exhibited in the same Gallery) detaches itself. And you ought afterwards, if you have eye for colour, never more to mistake a tinted drawing for a painting." But to many the brilliance of hue, the sparkle of light, the all-pervading radiance of Albert Moore's colour, were but the "thin and abstract system of colour" which in his work many even of the best critics condemned.

Of actual teaching, until he was ten years old, Albert Moore may be said to have had none. But in following his own taste, he was doubtless influenced by the artistic creed held by those about him ; for his surroundings were calculated to prevent the self-teaching of his early years from lapsing into the weakness either of careless trifling or the perniciousness of imitation.

The help of his father and brothers, each an earnest student of Nature, would have prevented his work becoming either conventional or eccentric, had his natural instincts not in themselves been, as they were, correct.

That this system which he followed, of free, unhampered practice, produced marvellous results, is shown by the extraordinary technical merit which his work had reached when, in his tenth year, he, in crayon, drew a portrait of his father—one which, in skill of execution, would have done no discredit to a painter of experience.

In 1853, when Albert Moore was twelve years old, his instruction in art may be said to have commenced ; for after a short time spent in work at the School of Design in York, he gained, from the Science and Art Department, a medal for one of his drawings.

Two years later, his father being dead, and his mother having moved from York to London, general education was acquired by him in the Kensington Grammar School, where he remained a pupil until, in 1858, he joined the Royal Academy Schools, hoping there to gain practical instruction in his profession—although in the year prior to this, and also in the same year, he appeared, as an exhibitor of a couple of water-colour drawings, on the walls of the Royal Academy.

His stay under the Academic rule was but brief, for he felt that the cramping restriction of its methods retarded, rather than advanced, his art. Therefore, after a few months, he left the Schools and, with a few kindred spirits, formed a small sketching society which met periodically at the several houses of

its members, amongst whom were numbered Fred. Walker, W. B. Richmond, Marcus Stone, and Henry Holiday. The influence of Mr. W. Eden Nesfield, an architect of genius, though of little or no fame, showed itself at this time in the work of Albert Moore ; and it was through this influence that he commenced the series of ceiling and wall painting with which, until 1872, he occupied a great portion of his time.

"CANARIES." BY ALBERT MOORE.

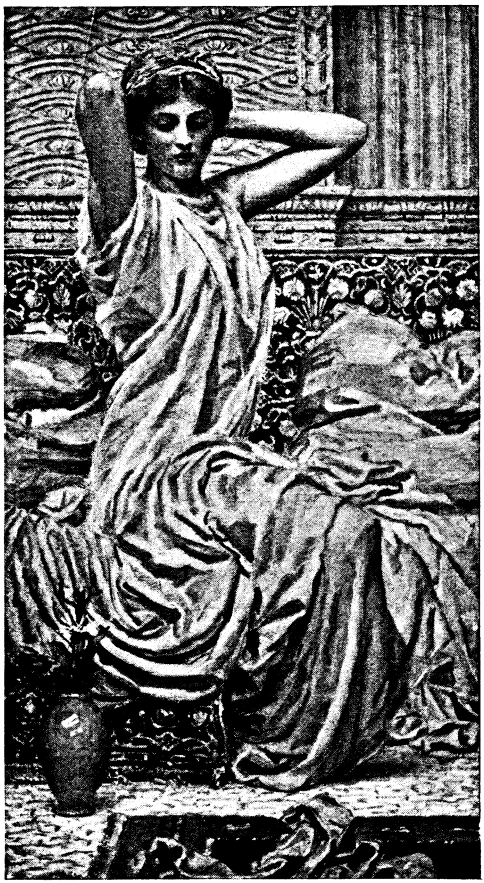
From the original in the collection of the Rt. Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P. Reproduced, by permission, from a photograph by the Woodbury Permanent Photographic Company.

"SAPPHIRES." BY ALBERT MOORE.

From the original in the collection of the Rt. Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P. Reproduced, by permission, from a photograph by the Woodbury Permanent Photographic Company.

The designed and executed mural decorations at Coombe Abbey, St. Albans, Rochdale, and Claremont, may be taken as symbolising the direction in which his work, a few years later, was to tend.

Mr. Baldry fixes the term of Albert Moore's probationary career in art as ending in 1874, when he may be said to have abandoned finally the expression in use in former years, and from which date, his technical methods



"THE TOILET." BY ALBERT MOORE.

Reproduced from a photograph by Messrs. Henry Dixon and Sons, Albany Street, N.W.

perfected, his æsthetic sense of discriminating choice determined, he commenced to project, before an unappreciative public, the series of colour-realisations of the art of Phidias with which his whole nature was imbued.

From that time—1874—with the exception of the period at the end of his life in which, his bodily health being enfeebled by illness, his mind returned to a more emotional condition, he, in every picture which issued from his studio, demonstrated his faith in the Decorative.

He possessed in some degree what Symonds calls "the faults of the Miniaturist," for, in detail, each figure in his pictures is more perfect in itself than is each picture in itself as a whole; not one of which pictures can be held to be entirely free from the charge of affectation frequently brought against him by those who ignored the fact that the world into which he sought to transport us was a strange one—a world not inhabited by men and women of flesh and blood, but one in which maidens are embodied goddesses whose lives are passed in apocalyptic leisure.

During his lifetime Albert Moore received no official recognition of his ability; and Mr. Whistler, whose caustic tongue spoke many truths, summed up the verdict of posterity in these words: "Albert Moore—poor fellow!—the greatest artist that, in the century, England might have cared for and called her own—how sad for him to live there!—how mad to die in that land of important ignorance and beadledom!"

"COMPANIONS." BY ALBERT MOORE.

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THE SPECULATIONS OF JACK STEELE.

By ROBERT BARR.*

IV.—A SQUARE MEAL.

SUGAR is a fattening product, and the Consolidated Beet Sugar Company waxed fat and prospered. Its shares stood high on the Stock Exchange, and the members of the syndicate to whom Jack Steele had sold his portion were exuberantly grateful to the young man for the opportunity he had given them. His reputation of possessing a keen financial brain was enhanced by the forming of this company; for it was supposed that it was he who had induced Amalgamated Soap to take it up. It was erroneously surmised that the great Peter Berrington and his colleagues had been so much impressed with Steele's genius in the wheat deal, where he was opposed to them, that they now desired the co-operation of this rising young figure in the commercial world. No hint of the momentary death-struggle in the board-room of the bank had ever leaked out through the solid doors. Steele was now one of the men to be counted upon in the large affairs of the western metropolis. Everything he touched was successful. Personally he was liked, and great social success might have been his had he cared for society, which he did not. He was commonly rated as being worth anywhere from six to ten millions, and the world looked upon him as the most fortunate of men. It did him no harm to be thought to enjoy the backing of the powerful Peter Berrington, and probably not more than half-a-dozen men knew that such was far from being the case. He did not bask in Peter's smile, but rather shivered in his shadow.

The one man who had no delusions on the subject was John Steele himself. For the second time he had been entirely victorious over Nicholson and the gigantic coterie behind him; but this, strange as it may appear, gave him no satisfaction. If he had won the determined fight through his own superior skill, or because of some great display of mental power, he might have rested more at his ease. Had that been the case, he would have awaited the next onslaught with more equanimity than he at present possessed; but he knew that his victory came to him through chance—chance multiplied again and again. It was chance that his partner had been out of his room when the messenger-boy brought the telegram. It was chance that Steele had opened the telegram. It was chance that he knew a man who could decipher it before it was too late for him to take action on the information it carried. After these three lucky throws of the dice, he had to admit to himself that he handled the situation with diplomatic success; but it disturbed him to remember that all his vigilance would have proved unavailing had not pure luck stood his friend. Yet, after all, the initial mistake was Nicholson's, who should not have sent a cipher telegram to the office of the man he intended to destroy. Nicholson presumably did not know that his agent was actually housed with Steele, and it was a mistake on Metcalfe's part not to have furnished his chief with this information. But even putting the best face upon the matter, he could not conceal from himself the large part that chance had played in his salvation.

This never-lifted shadow of the silent Peter Berrington began to produce its effect upon him. He became timorous—afraid to venture in any large concern. He knew he was wasting time in pottering with small affairs—street railways in outside towns, the inaugurating of electric light here and there, and such enterprises, which furnished only a moderate revenue to an enterprising speculator. Time and again he refused chances involving large amounts which turned out tremendously lucrative to the promoters, but which he had been afraid to touch, fearing the grip of Peter Berrington's

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unseen hand on his throat. He began to acquire the unexpected reputation of being an over-cautious capitalist, and finally well-known people, who had much admiration for him, ceased to come to his office with their schemes. Steele laughed uneasily to himself as he thought that Peter Berrington might perhaps accomplish his purpose by the gradual wearing down of his courage. Of course, the fact that a project became successful was no proof that the hand of Nicholson was not concealed somewhere within its intricacies to clutch at John Steele if he had become involved. He tried to shake off this depression, and once or twice plunged rather recklessly, only to become nervous before the climax arrived and sell out, sometimes at a small profit and sometimes at a loss.

At last he came to the conclusion that it was not Peter Berrington at all, nor his shadow, that was affecting him, but the usual breakdown which afflicts strenuous business men in the stimulating atmosphere of a great American city.

"My nerve's gone; that's what's the matter with me," he said to himself. "I must go and rough it for a summer in the mountains, or else take a trip to some spa in Europe. If I keep on like this, I shall be utterly useless in a live city like Chicago."

He consulted several of his friends—many of them, in fact—and told them he was feeling far from fit. His complaint was common enough, and every man to whom he spoke suggested a remedy. Some advised the plunging into dissipation at a fashionable health resort, and some recommended various medicinal springs in Europe which would work wonders; but the majority counselled him to take rod and gun, and get into the Rocky Mountains, camp out, and live like an Indian.

"Then," they said jocularly, smiting him on the back, "you'll be all right, and come back yearning for scalps on the Stock Exchange."

The newspapers mentioned the fact that John Steele was going into the Rockies to hunt and fish and camp out for a month or two to recover tone.

It was at this interesting juncture that Miss Alice Fuller called to see him. Now, John Steele was the most susceptible of men, and one reason he had for not mixing in society was because he knew he would surely fall a victim to the first designing pretty girl who laid a trap for him—if, indeed, pretty girls ever do lay traps for men said to possess from six to ten millions. His weakness in this line was exemplified by his impetuous proposal to Miss Dorothy Slocum in the environs of Bunkerville, as has already been stated. But Miss Alice Fuller was not the commonplace young person Dorothy Slocum had been. He often thought of his proposal to Dorothy with a shudder, and accounted it a narrow escape, which, indeed, it was not, for Dorothy was thoroughly devoted to her station-master, and never gave even a thought to Mr. Jack Steele of Chicago.

Alice Fuller was a blonde, and she brought in with her to the conventional private office of John Steele, with its extremely modern fittings of card indexes, loose-leaf ledgers, and expanding office furniture, an air of breezy freshness that told of the mountainous west. Although dressed as any Chicago woman might be, there was, nevertheless, something about her costume which suggested the riding of mountain ponies and even the expert handling of a rifle.

The glory of a woman is her hair, and in truth Miss Fuller's golden tresses were glorious enough, but her eyes were the most distinguished and captivating features of a face sufficiently beautiful to attract attention anywhere. They were of a deep, translucent blue, darkening now and then into violet, like a pair of those limpid mountain lakes in the Rockies whose depths are said to be unfathomable. It was impossible to look into those honest orbs without trusting the clear purity of the soul behind them, and Jack, whose nerves were wrong, almost shivered with apprehension when they were turned full upon him.

"Lord save me!" he thought with a gasp, "if this girl wants to sell shares in the most bogus company afloat, I'm her victim. Jack, Jack, if your bank account is to remain intact, now is the time to play St. Anthony."

But aloud he said calmly enough—

"Pray be seated, madam," and she sank gracefully into a chair some way from the flat-topped desk behind which he was entrenched, although small protection the barricade afforded him against such artillery as a handsome young woman might bring to bear upon the position.

"It is so good of you to see me," said the girl. "I have read much of you in the newspapers, and I know that your time is valuable, so I shall take up as little of it as may be necessary to explain my business."

Somehow this remark, although only introductory sparring, disappointed young

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Mr. Steele. Nearly every stranger he met said the same thing in almost identical words. They all referred to his newspaper reputation, of which he was exceedingly tired, and nearly everyone spoke of the value of his time, promised not to encroach upon it, and then stayed for hours if they were permitted.

"My time is of little value at the present moment, Miss Fuller, because I am doing nothing. For some months past I have been rather out of health, and, in fact, within a few days I expect to leave Chicago."

"'Do you know anything of mines, Mr. Steele?'"

"Yes," she rejoined, "I saw that also in the papers. I read that you intended to go west among the mountains. Is that true?"

"Such are my present intentions, but they are always liable to change. A man who is fighting his own nerves is rather capricious, you know."

"Like a woman," laughed Miss Alice.

"Well, it is on account of the statement in the Press that I am here. I have been meditating calling upon you for a long time, but it appears we have no mutual friends who could give me an introduction, and so, seeing you were about to leave the city, I said to myself: 'It's now or never.' The reference to the mountains struck me as a lucky omen. You know we women are rather superstitious, Mr. Steele, and I think it was that even more than your impending departure which gave me courage to venture up here."

"I am very glad you came," said Jack Steele gallantly, "and I shall be more than pleased if there is anything I can do for you."

"My father is the owner of a gold-mine in the Black Hills. Do you know anything of mines, Mr. Steele?"

Jack slowly shook his head. The mere mention of a gold-mine did something to clarify his brain from the glamour that was befogging it.

"I know nothing whatever about mines, Miss Fuller, excepting the fact that more gold has been sunk in gold-mines than has ever been taken out of them."

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear you say that," replied the girl, with a slight tremor of apprehension in her voice, "and, furthermore, I do not in the least believe it to be true. Nothing can be more lucrative than a good gold-mine, for its product is one of the few things taken from the earth which does not fluctuate in value. With copper, or silver, or iron, you are dependent on the market; not so with gold."

"You are a very eloquent advocate, Miss Fuller. Where is your father?"

The girl looked up quickly at this sudden change of subject, and once more Jack fell under the fascination of those enchanting eyes.

"My father? He is in Chicago."

"Then, Miss Fuller, the best plan will be to have him call upon me, and we can discuss the mine together."

"Alas!" said the young woman, with a mournful droop of the head, "if that had been possible, I should not have been here. My father at the present moment is very ill and quite unable to discuss business with anyone. You are going from the city to the mountains in search of health. He has come from the mountains to the city on the same quest. The gold-mine is at once our hope and our despair. If it can be properly worked, we are certain it will produce riches incalculable; but it takes money to make money, and my father knows no wealthy friends, nor has he wealth himself for the preliminary outlay. We are somewhat like King Midas, in danger of starving with gold all around us."

"Has the mine been opened, or is it only a prospective claim?"

"At the present moment there are from sixteen to twenty miners working upon it. The shaft, I believe, is something like a hundred feet deep, and one or two short galleries have been run. The ore assay is extremely rich: I have not the figures with me, but can easily bring them; and the reports are better and better as the miners proceed."

"If that be the case, Miss Fuller, I see no reason why you should lack for capital."

"There are a hundred reasons, but one is sufficient. Every capitalist shuns a gold-mine. They speak just as you spoke a moment ago. Then, you see, our lives having been spent in the west, we know very few eastern people, and those few have no money. The great difficulty is not in proving the wealth of the mine, but in getting a capitalist to listen. If you promise to listen, I shall undertake to prove to you that this is one of the most valuable properties in the world."

"Well, Miss Fuller, I am listening; but, as I told you, I know nothing whatever about gold-mines, and, indeed, am rather afraid of them. If the mine is producing ore in paying quantity, why does not your father have that ore crushed?—I suppose they could do that in the neighbourhood, or at Denver, or wherever the nearest mining town is—and with the product keep himself and pay his men?"

"That is exactly what he has done, Mr. Steele, and a ruinous thing it is to do. If it were not for that, we should have had to give up the struggle long ago. But there are no mines within miles of us, and we are two days and a half's journey from the nearest railway. Ore is bulky and heavy, and the transport alone, over those mountain roads, which are not roads at all, and scarcely even paths, is at once slow and expensive. Railway freight is high, and when it gets to the reducing-plant, we have to take exactly what is given us, because beggars cannot be choosers. We need machinery at the mouth of the pit, and whoever will furnish the money for that machinery is sure to reap a rich reward."

"Nevertheless——" protested Jack, but the girl interrupted him, her eyes aglow with fervour.

"You promised to listen, you know. There is another point I wish to put before you. The ore is very rich, and if we ship much of it, there is bound to be inquiry as to where it came from. Now, my father has been able to stake out only a comparatively small claim. If once it becomes known where this ore originates, there will be the usual rush. The rush is ultimately inevitable in any case, but my father is anxious to be fully secure before it comes."

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Miss Fuller," said Jack in a burst of enthusiasm, "I'll give you a thousand dollars; and if you make money out of your mine, you can repay me at your leisure."

Miss Alice Fuller slowly shook her golden head.

"I could not accept money in that way," she said. "It is like the giving of charity when a pathetic tale is told. Besides, a thousand dollars would be of no particular use: it would not purchase the stamp-mills, nor freight them to the mine. In two months, or three, we should be just where we are now, and the thousand dollars would be gone."

"What is it, then, you wish me to do, Miss Fuller?"

"I wish our transaction to be upon a sane business basis, and I don't want you to offer me a thousand dollars, or twenty thousand dollars, or two hundred thousand dollars again."

"I beg your pardon. I had no thought of charity or anything of the sort when I made my offer."

"I am sure you hadn't," said the girl, with a naïve confidence which Jack found very charming. "I'll tell you what I came to propose. You are going to the mountains in any case. Very well, go to the Black Hills: there you will find the air pure and

bracing; there are wild mountains and sparkling streams, and everything that a tired city man could wish. I want you to camp near our mine and investigate it thoroughly. If you are so satisfied with it as to justify the risk, I wish you to be prepared to buy a half share for three hundred thousand dollars."

John Steele drew a long breath.

"My purpose in going to the mountains was to get away from business, and not to take upon myself a new anxiety: to fish and shoot, not to pore over gold-bearing ore."

"Are you an enthusiastic sportsman, then?"

"Not at all. I was too busy when I was young to indulge in such recreation, and too poor. Since then I have become busier still."

"And too rich?" suggested the girl, with a smile.

"A man is never too rich, I am afraid."

"If you are not an enthusiastic sportsman, two days in the woods will prove more than enough for you. After that comes boredom, and a yearning for the ticker and the morning newspaper."

"I more than half believe you're right," said Jack ruefully.

"Of course I am right. Now, if you camp out beside the mine, you would have something to interest you. Don't bother about it for the first week. There is plenty of shooting and fishing in the neighbourhood."

"I hate to get two and a half days away from a telegraph-wire."

"Then you had better leave mountains alone and stay in Chicago."

Jack laughed.

"You are a very clever young lady, Miss Fuller, and I wonder you haven't made that gold-mine a success on your own."

"I am doing it now," she said with a flash almost of defiance from her eyes.

Again the young man laughed.

"Are you?" he said. "You women have us at a disadvantage when you talk business, but I am going to get right down to plain facts, and speak to you as if you were your own brother. You won't be offended?"

"Not in the least."

"Very well. Do you know what a salted mine is?"

"Certainly. I thought you said you knew nothing of mines? A salted mine is one in which rich ore has been planted for the cheating of fools."

"An admirable definition, Miss Fuller. Well, in the matter of mines I'm a fool, and a salted mine would take me in as a gold brick on State Street would delude an Illinois farmer."

"Then induce an expert to go with you—a mining expert who knows pay-ore when he sees it."

"I am more distrustful of mining experts than of salted mines."

The girl sighed.

"I suppose all faith has left Chicago?"

"It has—in gold-mines."

"Now, Mr. Steele, I'll talk to you as if you were your own sister. Have you ever done a stroke of useful toil since you were born?"

"Oh, yes; I worked on a railway."

"Very well. Go to the Black Hills and take a miner's outfit with you. Become for the time one of my father's *employés*—or, rather, boss of the gang, if you like. Go into that mine, and direct them where they are to run the next level, and follow that level for a month, working with the men and keeping clear of the blasts. After you have penetrated a month in any direction you please, take the ore from the last blast and have it assayed. A mine can't be salted under those conditions. If that whole mountain is salted with gold, you'd better buy it."

"No one can gainsay the honesty of that, Miss Fuller; but, to tell you the truth, I dread the two and a half days' journey from the railway."

"You don't need to. I will be your guide."

"What!" cried Jack, in amazement.

"I'll take you from the railway to the Hard Luck mine. Will you go?" she demanded with a touch of defiance.

"Go!" he cried, discretion struggling with enthusiasm. "Of course I'll go. Nothing would give me greater pleasure. But, then, on the other hand—you see—well—to speak quite frankly, for a young lady to—to, as one might say, journey across the plains——"

"Yes, I know, I know. You are talking now, not to my brother, as you remarked a while ago, but to my brother's sister. All my life I have had not only to take care of myself, but of my father as well. This project is a matter of vital importance to me, and I cannot allow it to fail merely because the rules of Society would frown on what I intend to do. I shall take with me my own tent, and an old man who was in my father's employ long before I was born. This is a cold business deal, and no other consideration is going to enter into it. So let us brush aside every other consideration and come down to plain facts. You offered me a

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thousand dollars, and I refused it. If you will now give me the necessary money, which may be anything from two hundred dollars upwards, depending on what you want to take with you, I shall go at once to Pickaxe Gulch, which is the nearest railway station to the Hard Luck mine, and will collect what transport we need. There I shall await your coming. Do you intend to take any servants with you?"

"I shall be accompanied by Sam Jackson, a negro man, who is the best cook in this town."

"Very well, you will need a horse for him, and one for yourself; I shall need two horses: that's four. Then if you will give me an idea of the number of tents and boxes you require, I shall secure mules enough to carry them. We shall want two or three men to look after the mules, and you must give me a week at least to get this cavalcade together. Sometimes there are neither animals nor men at Pickaxe Gulch, but I intend to telegraph at once and secure whatever transport is available."

Jack Steele smiled his appreciation of the capability displayed by the fearless young woman, opened his drawer, and took out a cheque-book.

"Shall we say five hundred dollars?" he asked, looking across at her. "You must leave some money with your father, you know."

"Five hundred will be ample," she replied decidedly, and he wrote a cheque for that amount.

Later on in his life Jack Steele remembered that demand for money with admiration. It was just one of those little points where a less subtle person than Miss Fuller would have made a mistake, deluded by success in getting him to promise to make the trip. But the young woman was evidently shrewd enough to know that after she left he would wonder, she having pleaded poverty, where the money came from to pay for so long a railway journey and at the same time provide for an ailing father at home. He always regarded that request for expenses as the culminating climax of a well-thought-out plan.

When John Steele stepped down from the sleeping-car in the early morning at Pickaxe Gulch, he found Alice Fuller the sole occupant of the platform. She welcomed him with the cordiality of good comradeship. Her costume differed rather strikingly from the apparel she wore in his office. She reminded him of one of those reckless female riders he had seen at Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, and he was forced to confess that the outfit suited her to perfection. She was even more attractive than when he had first seen her, and he could hardly have believed that possible. Before he ventured to compliment the young woman on her appearance, she complimented him on his.

"You are already looking very much better than you did in the city."

"Yes!" he cried jubilantly. "Your visit did me ever so much good; and, besides that, I am now out from under Peter's shadow."

"'Peter's shadow?'" she repeated. "What is that? The shadow of a mountain?"

"In a way, yes," laughed Jack, "and a gold-producing mountain at that. I have been a pretty anxious man these many months past; but now, whether it is the exhilaration of the air in the west, or the prospect——" he hesitated a moment, then continued—"of this journey, I am quite my own man once more."

Without reply she led the way to the dusty road which ran between two rows of roughly built shanties.

"Have you had breakfast?" she asked.

"No."

"I thought you might not have an opportunity to get anything to eat on the train, as it stops here so early, and I have ordered a meal for you at the one tavern in this place, which is far from being first-class. However, you possibly can endure such a repast for once, and then we can get on our way as soon as possible."

"Oh, the cuisine of the west is no surprise to me," said Steele. "I've had a good deal of experience with it in my time."

They walked up the street together, the negro cook following and carrying Steele's valise. At the tavern the caravan was collected, and more than ever the resemblance to the Wild West Show struck him. The boxes had been sent on some days ahead, and were now securely fastened to the backs of the mules. Four saddle-horses were tied to the rude pillars of the verandah. Steele went inside the building and partook of the breakfast, such as it was, and ten minutes later the procession started north.

Their route lay across the plain, and during the forenoon the party traversed a road of sorts, reasonably well defined. In the horizon loomed low mountains, which did not seem perceptibly nearer when a halt was called by the side of a stream to prepare lunch. Steele was more accustomed to a street-car than to the

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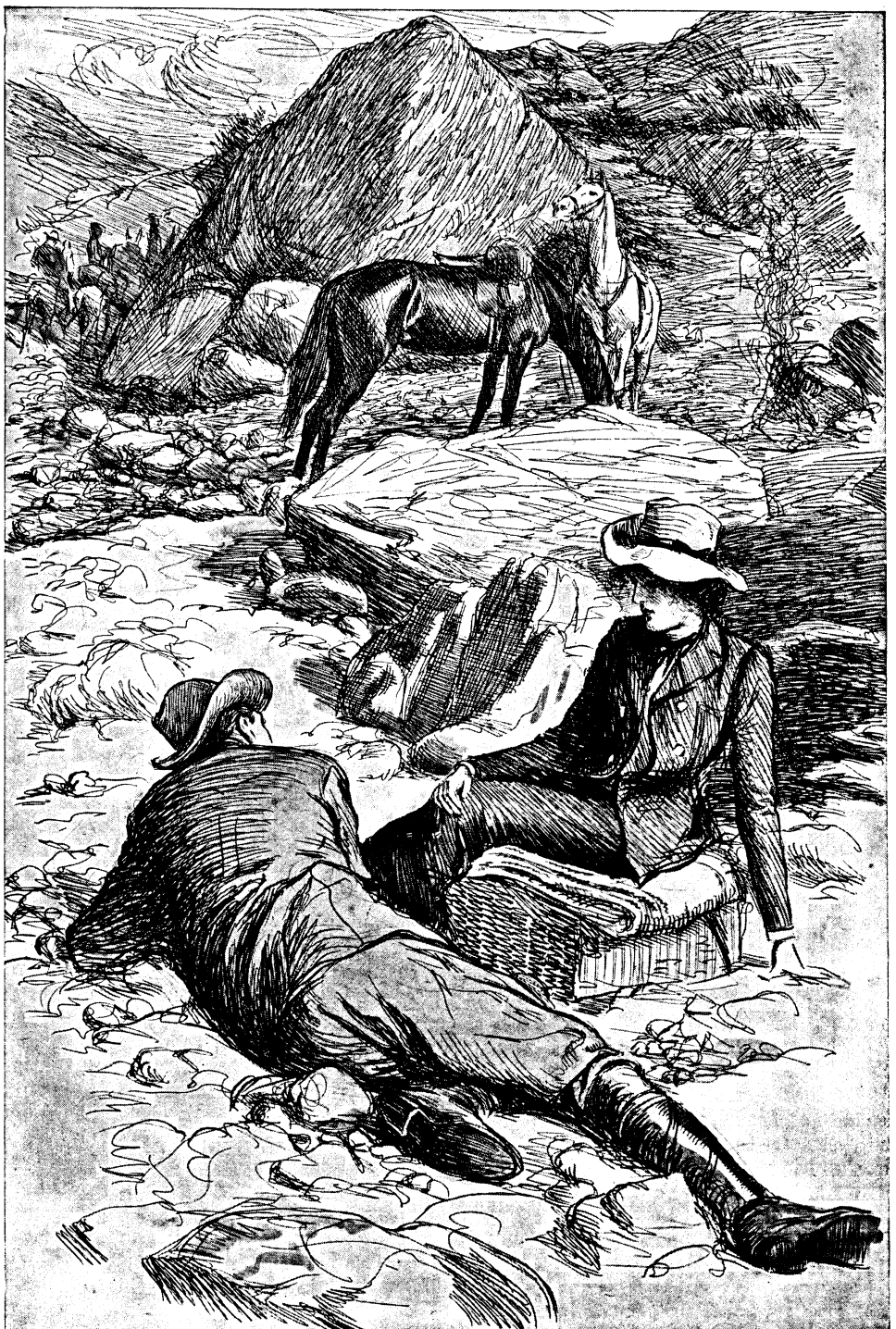

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"He persuaded her to linger after the cavalcade had moved on."

back of a horse, but the way was level, and the horse developed none of those buck-jumping peculiarities which Jack, in his eastern ignorance, had always associated with the steeds of the far west. His business heretofore had never taken him away from a line of railways, and where it had been necessary to make a road journey, the jaunt was accomplished in some sort of vehicle. However, he soon became accustomed to his new method of locomotion, and succeeded better than he had anticipated.

Miss Fuller proved a most expert horsewoman, and her superb attitude in the saddle still further enslaved this ardent young man, who began to think he had never really lived until now. He was rather disappointed, but rendered none the less eager, to find that he was not getting as much of her company as he had hoped. In the beginning they rode side by side in front of the cavalcade, to be out of the dust which the mule train raised. But every now and then she wheeled her horse round and allowed the procession to pass her, scanning each animal and its burden with an eye of an expert, seeing that everything was in order. When Steele expressed admiration of her capability, Miss Fuller told him she had many times been in full charge of a similar expedition going or coming from the mine; and once when he complained of lack of companionship, she informed him that success depended a great deal on the first few hours of the march, and she had to see that none of the animals fell lame, and that no burden shifted to cause a mule to lag behind its fellows.

"To-morrow," she said, "we will be among the foothills, and even this afternoon we shall be free of the road and the dust. Then, if everything is going well, I may find plenty of time to talk to you, for I see you are anxious to learn more about the mine before you reach it."

Jack threw a free-hearted laugh on the echoless air. Any little incident seemed now a fit subject for boisterous laughter. The clear atmosphere was as exhilarating as wine, and there was the further intoxicant of the girl's alluring presence.

Lunch by the side of the stream more than made amends for the unattractive breakfast. The efficient Jackson had caused each of the numerous boxes to be numbered, and he began on Number One, which his master said was a very good thing to look after. He produced a portable stove, and with a handful of coke performed miracles in the desert. It was soon evident that Jack Steele had no intention of starving himself while he wandered in the wilderness. He took from its straw envelope a bottle of prime champagne, a drink which doubtless had never quenched thirst on that particular route before. Miss Fuller partook of the wine but sparingly, and lifted her glass when he proposed the toast of success to the expedition, thrilling him as she did so with those enthralling eyes of hers, and the young man began to wonder whether he actually saw heaven in their depths, or was looking at a desert mirage through an atmosphere of sparkling wine.

He persuaded her to linger after the cavalcade had moved on, saying they would overtake it at a gallop, and the young woman, with scarcely concealed reluctance, acquiesced. He threw himself full length at her feet and gazed up at her, while she watched, with a suggestion of frown on her smooth brow, the procession lessening in the distance. He lit a cigarette, with her permission, and began the sort of conversation which a young man in the early stages of fascination is apt to indulge in. At first it seemed to him her thoughts were elsewhere, which was not in the least flattering to a person who was doing his best. On his chiding her for this, she drew a sharp breath and cast a glance upon him which he fancied was the reverse of friendly. It was veiled an instant after, and then, with something like a sigh, she appeared to accept the situation.

At this presaging of victory, Jack Steele's conscience began to trouble him. He guessed why she appeared so changeable. Her father's future and her own depended on the goodwill of the young man stretched at her feet. She was anxious not to offend him, and yet her reluctance to remain alone with him, her absent-minded look, and the slight frown that now and then marred her brow, were hints that his attentions proved unwelcome. Jack surmised that any undue compliments or any too palpable indulgence in sentiment at this particular moment might prove disastrous to ultimate success. The resigned air with which she endeavoured to face a *tête-à-tête* not to her liking touched his pride, and also made him rather ashamed of himself for taking advantage of one who in the circumstances was helpless. He admired and respected women, but did not in the least understand them. Nearly all his dealings hitherto had been with men, and with men he knew what he was about, and could hold his own in any company, but with a pretty woman he felt awkward and inept. He

wondered if he could put this girl at her ease by telling her he had quite made up his mind to finance the mine, whether it proved all she said or the reverse. Yet she might regard this statement as merely an unblushing bid for her preference, for she knew that until he had examined the mine any such avowal would be made merely because he thought it would please her. While these thoughts ran through his mind, a silence had fallen between them, which, however, the girl appeared not to notice, for her eyes were fixed on the distant mountains. She was quite startled by the suddenness with which he sprang to his feet.

"Miss Fuller," he cried, "I see you are anxious to be off towards the hills, and it is selfish of me to detain you here."

He held out his hand to her and helped her up. She smiled very sweetly and said—

"I think it is time we were on our way again. We have further to go than you suspect before we reach the regular camping-ground."

He had reason to congratulate himself on his intuition, for during that journey she was kinder to him than she had ever been before, as if anxious to make up for her former coldness.

The sun had gone down ere they reached the halting-station for the night. They were now on an elevated plateau among the hills, and an impetuous torrent near by gave forth the only sound that broke the intense stillness. Tents were pitched, horses and mules tethered, and Jackson set out a dinner which their keen appetites made doubly memorable. Night came down, and the moon rose gloriously in the east. Time and place were ideal for a lovers' meeting, but the adage which intimates that luck with gold does not run parallel with luck in love, proved true in this instance. Immediately after partaking of the excellent coffee Jackson had brewed, the young woman rose and held out her hand, pleading fatigue.

"I must bid you 'Good night,'" she said shortly.

"Oh! won't you stay a little while and enjoy this unexampled moonlight? It seems as if I had never seen the moon before."

The young woman smiled wanly, but shook her head.

"I'm really very tired," she explained. "I have had a week of it at that awful hotel in the Gulch. It is fearfully noisy at night with drinking cowboys and miners, and so I have had scarcely any sleep for a long while. If I have proved a dull companion to-day, that is the reason, and I am sure you will excuse me now."

"Miss Fuller, you could not be dull if you tried. I am sorry you should have had so much trouble on my account at that terrible station. I should have sent a man, but I did not know the horrors of the place before seeing it. Pray forgive my selfishness."

"Oh, that was really nothing. I am quite accustomed to the life; but, somehow, the first night in the mountains always leaves me stupid and drowsy."

"To-morrow night, then," he said very quietly, "we may perhaps view the moonlight together."

"To-morrow night," she murmured and was gone.

Jack Steele threw himself into the canvas camp-chair, and, reclining, gazed on the moonlit plain below and listened to the roar of the torrent. Dreamily he fancied himself floating in the seventh heaven of bliss.

Next morning the camp was early astir, for a long day of mountaineering lay ahead. The party numbered seven, all told, there being three men of peaceable demeanour, but rough aspect, in charge of the pack-train. At no time during that day did Jack have an opportunity of speaking with Miss Fuller alone. They could not ride together, as the mountain path was too narrow. After dinner, at the final camping-place, a wild spot in a profound valley, where Jack saw with dismay the moon would not be visible, the girl seemed as loth to keep him company as had been the case the night before. She laughed somewhat harshly, he thought, when he complained that she must have known they could not see the moon.

"You can study its rays on the northern peaks," she said. "Who would ever have expected a modern financier to yearn for the moon?"

"A modern financier is but a man, after all," protested Steele.

"I have sometimes doubted it," replied the girl cynically.

"Well, Miss Fuller, if you will sit down again, even in the absence of moonlight, I think I can remove your doubts."

She stood there hesitating for a few moments, but it was too dark to see the expression on her face. Finally she sat down in the chair from which she had risen.

"I am seated," she said; "but not to talk of moonlight, merely to tell you that I intend to go no farther. To-morrow morning we bid 'Good-bye' to each other. You go north, and I go south."

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"She slipped a small box into his coat pocket."

"Oh, I say!" cried Jack reproachfully, "that's contrary to contract. You promised to lead me to the mine."

"I know I did; but it is always a woman's privilege to change her mind. Perhaps you will understand I do not wish to influence you at all in the decision you may come to about the mine."

"Would it make you abjure your cruel resolve if I informed you that I have quite determined to invest in the mine if it gives any show of success, which I am sure it will do from what you have told me about it?"

"The mine must plead its own cause," she said, with an indifference that amazed him. "You have no real need of me as a guide, for the three men I engaged know the route as well as I do. They have been over it often enough. I am really very anxious about my father. He promised to telegraph me at Pickaxe Gulch, but has not done so. I sent a despatch the day before you arrived,

but no reply came, and it may be waiting for me now at the office there."

"Why not send back one of the men?"

"Because of my own anxiety. I fear the telegram may call me to his side. I think you will understand now why I have been distraught while in your company."

"Miss Fuller, believe me, I am very sorry to hear that this worry has been hanging over you. If I had known, I should have proposed our remaining at Pickaxe Gulch until you had heard from your father. I fear my own conduct and conversation may have added to your discomfort."

"Oh, no, no," said the girl quickly, rising again.

"Will you accept this trifle from me?"

He spoke hurriedly, and took from his waistcoat pocket something that she knew to be a ring, for even in the dim light it sparkled as if fire were playing from its facets.

"I'd rather not," she replied, stepping backwards.

"It will bind you to nothing—nothing at all. It is simply to keep me in your memory until we next meet."

"Oh, I shall never forget you!" she cried, in a tone of bitterness that startled him.

"It is a mere trinket," he urged, "and I bought it for you before I left civilisation. If you do not accept it, I shall throw it into the darkness of the valley yonder."

"That would be foolish, even for you!"

"Why, Miss Fuller, such a remark has a very dubious sound. What do you mean by it? Do you think I am foolish?"

"Oh, I don't think anything at all of either you or your folly. I tell you I merely want to get away."

"Won't you take the ring with you?"

She stood for a long while with head bowed.

"I don't suppose it makes any difference one way or the other," she said at last.

"Of course it doesn't. I told you it wouldn't."

"Very well, I shall take the ring, if you will accept a much cheaper and more significant present from me in the morning."

"I shall accept anything you like to give me, Miss Fuller, gratefully, in the morning or at any future time."

"I wonder," was all her comment, as she took the ring and instantly disappeared.

Somehow this night held none of the glamour that distinguished the previous evening. The depth of the profound shadows surrounding him was merely emphasised by the touch of cold moonlight on the hilltops far away. Jack wondered if the exhilarating effect of the atmosphere had departed, leaving him sober again. He felt strangely depressed, and although he immediately entered his tent and flung himself, dressed as he was, upon his canvas cot, he found it difficult to fall asleep. It was after midnight before he dozed off, and then his slumber was troubled and uneasy. Towards morning, however, a kind of stupor descended upon him, leaving him dreamless and lost to the world. This was broken by a sharp and angry voice, whose meaning did not at first reach his consciousness, but the sentence lingered in his awakening mind and at last became clear to him, as an image comes out during the gradual development of a photographic plate.

"I tell you I will not leave until I bid 'Good-bye' to Mr. Steele."

It was Alice Fuller's voice, and in an instant the young man was on his feet and out of the tent. It was just daylight, grey and chill, but already the camp was astir and the young woman in her saddle.

"Did you call me?" he cried.

"No," she answered; but he seemed to detect a tremor of fear in her voice.

"I thought I heard you say you wished to bid 'Good-bye' to me!"

"You must have been dreaming. But I do wish to bid you 'Good-bye.'"

Two of the muleteers stood near, and the old attendant, mounted, had already started slowly on his way. Jack sprang to her side, and as he came to a stand by her horse, she stooped and slipped a small box into his coat pocket.

"Good-bye! good-bye!" she cried somewhat boisterously, with an exclamation that seemed to be half sob and half laugh. "Go back to your tent at once and brush your hair. It's enough to frighten anyone," and now she laughed with unnecessary vehemence, the near mountains echoing the peal with a strange mocking cadence that sent a chill up the spine of one listener.

"What does this mean?" he asked himself.

The man at the bridle turned the horse's head towards the distant railway, and the other smote the animal on the flank.

"Let go my horse!" commanded Miss Fuller savagely. The man slouched away. She touched the horse with her heel and galloped off, while Steele stood in a daze watching her. Only once she looked round, then made a quick motion to the pocket of

her jacket and disappeared round the ledge of rock. Jack remembered the packet she had dropped into his pocket, and imagining her gesture might have reference to that, walked back to his tent to examine the present so surreptitiously given him, remembering that she had said the night before it would be more significant than the ring he had given her. It was a little, square parcel, tied in a bit of newspaper with a red string. He whisked this off, and held in his hand a box of white metal. Opening the box, he saw within it a simple cake of soap!

Jack Steele held this on his open palm, gazing at it like one hypnotised.

"My God!" he groaned at last, "soap—Amalgamated Soap! Peter Berrington and Nicholson! Trapped, as I am a fool and a sinner! These muleteers are the real chiefs of this expedition. They saw Alice Fuller weakening; but she weakened too late, and now they have sent her away. What's the object of all this? It is too fantastic to imagine that Nicholson supposes he can exact all I possess as ransom. Even the Black Hills are not the mountains of Greece. What is it, then? Murder? That's equally incredible, and yet possible. Here am I, unarmed, rifles in the boxes, no one with me but a cowardly nigger. Walked right into the trap with my eyes open, like a gaping idiot! Well, Jack Steele, you deserve all you will get. Let's see what it is."

He strode out of the tent. The negro was preparing breakfast. The three men stood in a group together, talking, but they looked round and became silent as he approached.

"I have changed my mind," said Steele; "we're going back to the railway."

"Oh, no, we're not," said one of the men, stepping forward, and taking a revolver from his hip-pocket; "we're going on to the mine."

"Is there a mine?" asked Jack, with a sneering laugh.

"Oh, there's a mine all right enough, and they're waiting for you there."

"Who?"

"You'll find out about twelve o'clock to-day."

"See here, boys," said Steele persuasively, "I'll make you three the richest men in this part of the country if you'll accompany me safely back to the railway."

"We've heard that kind of talk before," replied the man, "and have had enough of it. You tell that to the boss of the gang at the mine; and whatever he says, we'll agree to."

"Yes, but at the mine. How many are there, by the way?"

"You'll see when you reach the spot."

"Well, even if there's one more, he divides the loot with you. You can make better terms with me now than you can at the mine."

"Chuck it, stranger. There ain't no use giving us any more taffy. You're going on to the mine."

"All right," said Jack, turning on his heel. "I'll have breakfast first. Is the coffee ready, Jackson?"

"Yes, sir."

Jack sat down at the collapsible table and enjoyed a hearty meal.

At noon they reached the mine, which was there sure enough, and a dozen gaunt, wild-eyed men, who were sitting round, stood up when the riders came into sight. They gave no cheer when they saw the captive, nor did their attitude of listless, bored indifference change a particle as Steele stopped his horse and dismounted.

"Here's the goods," said the leader of the muleteers, and the boss of the mining gang nodded, but made no reply.

"Good day, gentlemen," began Steele, a smile coming to his lips in spite of the seriousness of the crisis, as he thought that this sombre, silent gang in the midst of the mountains bore a comical resemblance to the gnomes in "Rip Van Winkle" when that jovial inebriate appeared amongst them. "I take it, sir, that you are leader here, and I think there has been some mistake. During to-day's journey I have been forced to travel to this mine against my will. You seem to have been expecting me. Now, what's up?"

"You'll be, in about ten minutes," said the leader. "Dakota Bill, where's your rope?"

"Here it is," said Bill, stepping forward and exhibiting a slip-noose at the end of about thirty feet of stout line.

"Now, stranger, if you've got any messages to leave your friends, we'll give you ten minutes to write or say them."

"I've no messages, thank you, but I have a lively curiosity to know what all this means."

"Oh, of course you've no suspicion about what it means, have you?"

"No, I have not."

"You never saw your mine before, did you?"

"It isn't my mine."

"I knew you'd say that. Well, now, we've been left here for four months without

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"'We've sworn to hang you, and we're *going* to hang you.'"

a markee of pay. For the last month we would have starved if it hadn't been for Dakota Bill's good work with a rifle; but even the game has fled from this accursed place, and now we *are* starving. You're the man responsible, and you know it. We've sworn to hang you, and we're *going* to hang you."

"My dear sir, your statement is definite and concise, without being as illuminating as I should like. A mistake has been made, of which I am the innocent victim. You are the victims, too, for that matter; because, after all, it is not a mistake, but a conspiracy. I can see, however, that nothing I may say will mitigate the situation in the slightest degree. I shall, therefore, not indulge in useless declamation. Three things are fixed: I am the owner of this mine; I have cheated you out of your pay for four months; therefore I am to be hanged. There comes into my mind at this moment something I have read somewhere about hangings at Newgate prison in England. They drop a man, then all concerned go at once to enjoy what is called the 'hanging breakfast.' The gruesomeness of such a proceeding fastened the item in my mind. Let's have a 'hanging lunch.'"

"Stranger, as I understand your remarks, the person turned off didn't attend that breakfast."

"No, he didn't."

"Very well, stranger, we'll look after the lunch when you're strung up."

"But, excuse me, the victim had a hearty breakfast *before* he was hanged. Now, I beg to point out to you that I drank my coffee just about daylight this morning, and ever since I've travelled over the worst set of mountains it has ever been my privilege to encounter. I'm as hungry as a bear. I therefore insist on your lunching with me, and I shall give you a meal such as you wouldn't better at the Millionaire's Club. Before I left home, six manufacturers of portable stoves insisted on my accepting one each, in the hope of getting an unsolicited testimonial. I shall leave the stoves with you, and trust you will recommend them to your friends. I don't need them where I'm going."

"No," said one of the party, "they'd melt there."

"Now, Jackson," cried Steele enthusiastically, "set up the whole six stoves. You've got to cook dinner for the party. But, meanwhile, open some of those boxes of new sardines with the trimmings on, which they've just sent across to us from Brittany. A little caviare also may be a novelty in this district. I think we've plates enough to go round. If not, use saucers or the tins. Gentlemen, I take it you don't need an

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appetiser, but what will you drink before we begin?"

"I admit, stranger, you're a mighty plausible cuss, and we expected that; but you don't palaver this crowd. There's no drinking till after the ceremony."

For the first time there was a murmur of disapproval at this, but the leader held up his hand.

"See here, you fellows," he said, "we've got to deal with a pretty slippery customer. You know what them city men are. Now, there's no drinking till after the performance; you hear me. I'd string him up this moment, only we'd scare his cook white, and then we'd have to eat things raw."

Jackson handed round sardines and other tempting extras, while Steele put the collapsible table on its legs and opened various boxes, from one of which he took out a case of champagne, and another of Scotch whisky. Then, getting a large pitcher which had been intended as the water-holder of his tent, he poured two bottles of Scotch whisky into it, followed by bottle after bottle of champagne until the jug was full. Meanwhile the busy negro had got the six stoves ablaze, and the appetising smell that came from the utensils over the fires made the starving miners oblivious to everything else. The first course was devoured in silence.

"Although you may not care to consume intoxicating liquors—and I quite agree with you that it is best to keep sober—I hope you have no objection to temperance drinks. Who'll have some cider?"

"Cider?" said the leader "Have you got any?"

"Here's a pitcher full."

"That's all right. Pour it out. I wish you had brought beer instead. We'd risk beer."

"Oh, well, you can risk the cider. I'm sorry I haven't any beer," and, hungry as he was, the young man himself poured out full glasses to each.

"By jiminy crickets!" cried the leader, "that's the best cider I ever tasted."

"It's the very best cider made in this country," said Steele earnestly, "and thank goodness, I've got plenty of it."

As course after course was served, and bumper after bumper was drunk, the geniality of the crowd rose and rose, until Steele at last saw he could possibly make terms with them, but he resolved not to chance that. He determined to leave them so drunk that none could move; then he would depart at his leisure. Under the exhilarating effects of the mixture he poured out, all objections to intoxicating liquor fled from the jovial assemblage, and Jackson now opened whisky bottle after whisky bottle. The miners were laughing, singing, weeping on each other's necks, utterly oblivious to owners of mines, lack of pay, lynching, or anything else, when Steele and Jackson mounted their horses, the coloured cook leading one of the mules laden with provisions ample for a week's journey.

When Jack Steele reached Pickaxe Gulch, he never thought he would be so glad to see a pair of rails again. He felt like throwing his arms round the neck of the station-master, but instead, asked that rough diamond if there was any news.

"No, not much," replied the station-master, "except that Peter Berrington, the billionaire, is dead."

"Thank God!" fervently ejaculated Steele, to the astonishment of the station-master.

"Yes," said the official, "he's gone where his money won't do him no good. Found dead in his chair in his office in New York, two days ago. There's the paper, if you want to read about it."

Steele went in and possessed himself of the paper.

"By Jove!" he muttered, as he gazed at the big, black headlines. "He or his system sent a man to death when he should have been preparing for death himself. That's as it should be. Thank goodness the shadow has lifted!"

John Steele forgot the words of Shakespeare—

The evil that men do lives after them.

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Photo by] [*F. Frith and Co., Reigate.*

A PASTORAL VIEW NEAR MORETONHAMPSTEAD

THE DARTMOOR FARMER.

By EDEN PHILLPOTTS.*

WHERE the hills are crowned with stone and rise mightily above the surrounding desert of granite-strewn heath, peat, fen, and glittering river, you shall note a solitary habitation and a few small fields unrolled like a map around it.

A rough cart-track winds to the farm over the undulating billows of the waste; utmost desolation encompasses this small abode, and, like anxious eyes, its little windows gaze out upon the surrounding immensity of Dartmoor, and stare unblinking at the storm and the sunshine, at the first roseate glow of dawn upon these stony hills, and at the slow and solemn oncomings of darkness or tempest. On high the great west wind roars cheerfully and plays wild tunes upon granite harps; cloud-shadows clothe the hills with their flying purple, and every elevation and hollow is dotted with hide or fleece, where roam the moorman's flocks and herds.

Here lies a "newtake" homestead; and it is to the surrounding waste, rather than his meagre fields, that the farmer looks for livelihood, because agriculture is an afflicted industry in this cradle of hurricanes and eternal rain. Pastoral enterprises prosper, but attempts to tame these savage tablelands have but added to the records of human failure.

"Scratch my face, and I'll pick your pocket," is the stern promise of Dartmoor to those who hopefully climb to delve upon her breast; and the threat is fulfilled.

Dwellers in this ancient Royal Forest have enjoyed special privileges for many centuries, and tenants of Venville look to the Moor for much that helps to make life easier. Under presentment of a Survey Court Jury dating from 1609, we learn that Venville tenants "have accustomed and used to have and take in and uppon the forrest of Dartmoore all things that maye doe them good, savinge vert [green oak] and venson [venison], paying for the same their Venvill rents and other dues as hath been time out of minde accustomed."

Thus, rights of pasturage and turbary accrue to all tenants of the Duchy of Cornwall upon Dartmoor, and any man who cares to make the experiment may lease a portion of this great watershed and erect his home upon it. Deserted dwellings not a few

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still stand in lonely glens, and write a story of human hopes and failures upon these heathery hills; for one hundred years ago the Moor began to be largely cultivated, and agricultural writers, with more imagination than knowledge, incited many a farmer to seek Dartmoor and wrestle with its problems.

In 1806, a topographical survey of the County of Devon gives hints to the capitalist in this connection, and foretells that "the improvement and cultivation of the Forest of Dartmoor will afford innumerable opportunities for the beneficial exercise of industry and capital. The agriculturist in particular will find everything to encourage his exertions." Many, unfortunately for themselves, took this advice, and there sprang up numerous tenements in the more sheltered river-valleys and hollows of the Moor.

A FARM COTTAGE AT BELLIVER, 1,050 FEET ABOVE SEA-LEVEL.

Two photos by] [*T. A. Falcon.*

PRIMITIVE COMFORT ON DARTMOOR: A GRANITE SEAT IN DUNNABRIDGE CATTLE "POUND."

But the best and most salubrious tracts of the land had already been farmed from immemorial time, and long before the date of "newtakes," certain venerable homesteads existed and prospered in snug and fertile nooks at the brink of the river. These mediæval farms lie chiefly beside Dart and her tributaries; and here may still be seen old-time buildings that rose when Elizabethan miners first swarmed upon Dartmoor and seamed every river for tin. They were owned under copy of Court Roll by Customary Tenants, and existed independently of the Duchy.

But the farms in these happy valleys are few, and even upon them little more agriculture is pursued than shall suffice to produce material for the personal uses of the farmer's household and his cattle. To the "in-country" Devon looks for her crops; Dartmoor is the great rearing-ground of beasts, and in that capacity rivals any other grazing district of the United Kingdom.

No illusions begot of that past craze for tilling the land remain with Venville tenants of to-day. They live hard, work hard, and still regard as luxuries the things that the lowland farmer has long been used to look upon as ordinary and necessary accompaniments of life.

In this uplifted region of sweet air, sweet water, stern granite, and rough weather there is no room for luxury; but the dwellers upon these sequestered wastes lack nothing of the high qualities that lift a man above circumstance. Rough as the vernacular upon their tongues they may be; stern of sentiment, untrustful, and puritanical of morals they often are; but a fine simplicity of heart obtains among them, and a grand self-reliance marks their lives.

Generations of men, moorland bred, partake of their environment's proper qualities

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Photo by] [*T. A. Falcon.*

GOOD PASTURAGE AT 1,100 FEET ABOVE SEA-LEVEL (SHERBERTON).

and imbibe with their mothers' milk something from the austere and candid bosom of this waste that serves to fortify the spirit and strengthen character.

Frugality, self-denial, ceaseless work, and ceaseless thrift are demanded from the tenant of the most favoured newtake farm. The battle is never-ending ; there can be no standing still. Turn your back upon the little fields, and indifferent Nature will quickly sow them with heather and thistle, furze and the green brake-fern ; spare generous nourishment, stint lime, or cease the endless labour of the share, and this hungry earth will deny every crop, will starve the grain, and turn the root into a hideous, forked thing, alike useless for beast or man.

Lime, above all manure, is needed by those who would cultivate the limeless peat, for Dartmoor devours bone like a dog, and her proclivity in that sort has denied a possibility to the antiquaries, who now diligently seek in cairn and barrow for relics of the aborigines.

A neolithic people dwelt here before dawn of history ; and by their alignments and meeting-places, marked with uplifted stones ; by their shattered sheepfolds and the ruins of their lodges ; by their monoliths, burial-places, and fabricated flints, we may read a little of their history ; but their bones have vanished into the substance of the heather, and shall no more be found than the blood they shed, or the tears they shed, in the morning of man's advent on this wild earth.

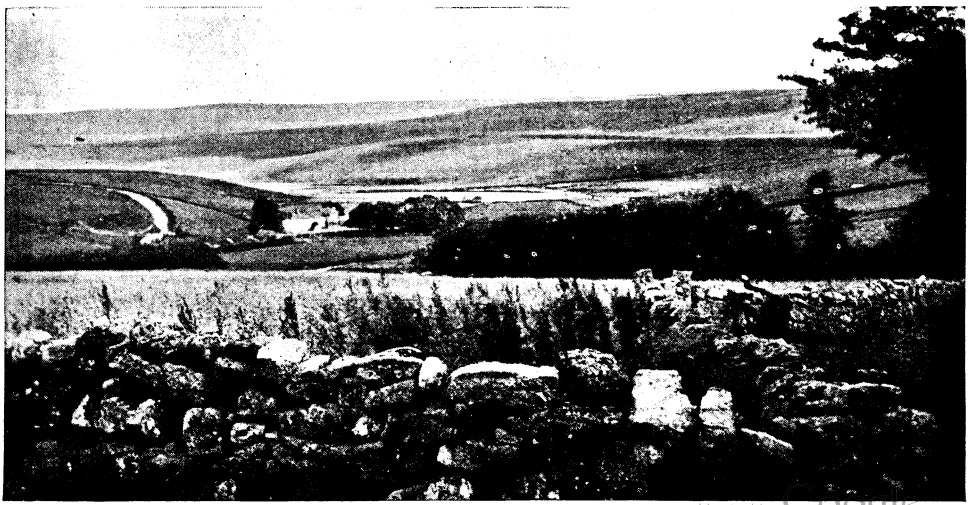

Photo by] [*T. A. Falcon.*

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AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ENCLOSURE ON BEARDOWN, TWO BRIDGES, 1,300 FEET.

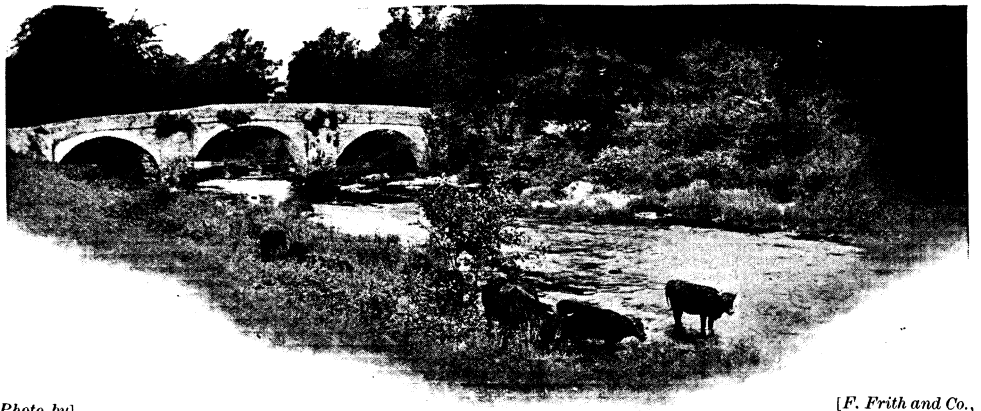

Photo by] [*F. Frith and Co., Reigate.*

ON A SMALL CATTLE-FARM.

Our Dartmoor farmers have shown scant respect for the remains of these pre-Adamites, and their graves and monuments now help to complete many a cottage or dry-built wall, even as the rough Christian symbol of the Middle Ages has often been uprooted to make a gatepost or finish a doorstep.

Men once grew rye on Dartmoor, and sanguine souls tried flax and bread-corn with small measure of success; but, nowadays, rotation of crops resolves itself into a simple matter, and nothing is attempted that will not repay cultivation.

Oats alone, of grain, prosper, and are used for "dredge" corn only; that is, the crop is employed as fodder without being threshed. It is sown the last week in March or early in April. Potatoes, which do well if treated generously, go to ground in March, April, or May, according to weather; mangolds are sown the second week of May, and swedes about mid-June.

Add to these crops the farmer's cabbage-patch, on the "lew," or most sheltered side of his dwelling, and a few crofts, or fields devoted to hay, which is rarely cut and harvested at this elevation before the end of July, and you have said all that need be said about agriculture. None of these products go beyond the husbandman's own gates, and the man who can produce sufficient oats and roots to support a fair head of stock through the months of winter, before the time returns for dispasturing, is fortunate.

The first object of farming on the Moor is to raise cattle. Beasts are not fattened here, but kept until of store age—*i.e.*, from two to three years old; then sold to the graziers in the rich lands below.

The true Moorman finds the business of

Photo by] [*T. A. Falcon.*

GOOD PASTURAGE UNDER BELLIVER TOR.

Photo by F. Frith and Co., Reigate.

RUSHFORD MILL, NEAR CHAGFORD.

rearing sheep and cattle fills his life, and many who toil upon this enormous grazing-ground not only keep their own beasts, but receive many more from the "in-country," and tend them on the uplands while summer lasts. From May until September the red hides of roaming heifers and bullocks, and the snow-white fleeces of the sheep, are scattered mile upon mile along these wastes, and where aforetime all was loneliness save for the hunting wolf-pack and the old cave bear, now shall be seen abundant flocks and herds.

The kine bellow melodiously, thunder in companies along, or stand dewlap-deep at scorching noontides in the pools of the rivers; the sheep wander together, and bells jangle from the wethers' woolly necks, where they graze on some steep hillside, or leap away like wild things with startled bleatings; the ponies race, unshod, in droves, and their shrill neigh comes down the wind as the hardy little creatures scamper to some eminence, and then face about, mares and foals together, that they may judge the intentions of any human wanderer on horse-back or on foot.

The Forest of Dartmoor is divided into four quarters, and these main great divisions are rented from the Duchy of Cornwall by various moormen, who, according to their powers and the extent of land at their disposal, receive cattle for the season.

Photo by [*T. A. Falcon.*

MEDIÆVAL ENCLOSURE AT RUNNAGE, WALLABROOK (1,170 FEET).

Hosted by GUAS

These moormen are also farmers; their work is of an arduous nature, and it calls for the employment of many subordinates. Two thousand head of cattle climb up to the eastern quarter when summer comes; the other quarters—north, south, and west—each take rather a smaller number; but in the northern division, which is the largest, artillery ranges absorb many square miles, and here additional labours of clearing cattle from the zone of fire devolve upon the local men at times of cannon practice.

Our War Office rents this tract of Dartmoor, but the loss of so much good grazing ground to the Venville tenants is considered and paid for. One lonely farm in the heart of this shell-swept region has a bomb-proof apartment, specially strengthened, so that the women and children may retire into shelter when the projectiles scream overhead, as sometimes happens.

Photo by] [*T. A. Falcon.*

A MOORLAND SETTLEMENT AT SWINCOMBE.

The sole danger is that a shell may burst short, and this, though an accident is very unusual, cannot be absolutely guarded against. Sometimes a lonely bullock, wandering by the targets long miles away from the cannon, pays penalty, but no human life has ever been lost, save when certain artillerymen were blown into their elements as the result of handling a live shell, instead of exploding it according to the rule prescribed.

The life of the Dartmoor farmer resolves itself into a struggle with winter and bad weather. For weeks at the time of snow he may be cut off from the world; for months in summer he may roam the waste and see few faces but those of his fellow-workers, or the chance visitors that make holiday in some border village.

His pleasure are few. A race-meeting, a revel, and market-day embrace his opportunities of amusement. On Sunday he rests from his labours as much as possible, and dons broadcloth and trudges to the nearest village with his family, that he may worship at church or chapel. Sometimes he takes his gun or rod and shoots the plovers, curlews, or rabbits, or catches the little brown trout that fill the streamlets of the Moor.

In winter he will mount his pony and ride to hounds, when an opportunity offers; and his information concerning the foxes is to be relied upon, for no man sees Reynard at home more often than a Dartmoor farmer. Many packs hunt these wild fastnesses, and the sport is as good as the going is tricky.

Harriers also hunt the Moor with fair success, and during the summer months various packs of other hounds show a high average of sport. The shooting is very rough, but snipe are plentiful on the marshes, and woodcock and duck also frequent sheltered combes or lonely river reaches. Plover are common, and at one time the blackcock was a frequent addition to the mixed bag; but he grows rare. Grouse have never settled on Dartmoor, though it has been attempted to establish them.

A very important feature of the moorman's summer work is concerned with saving of fuel. The peat-beds stretch in every hollow, climb each hillside, and lie, like one enormous sponge, in the granite basin of the Moor. To these dark, chocolate-coloured ridges from June onward comes the farmer with his peat-knife and peat-iron. He cuts the heather-rind off the soil, then digs deep into the peat-cake beneath, and presently piles his firing in little stacks to dry. Given fair weather, the operation proceeds swiftly under summer suns; and then comes the cart, and the great stack by the farmyard door soon rises.

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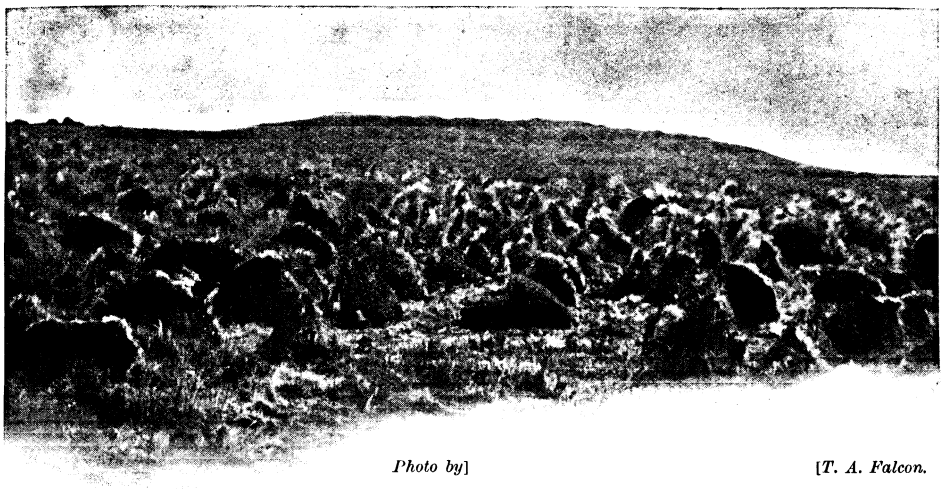

Photo by] [*T. A. Falcon.*

TURF-DIGGING ON HAMILDON (1,700 FEET HIGH).

Sometimes sudden storms ruin the cut peat; then it is not worth the saving; and where the *débris* sinks back upon the earth again, there spring up good things for those who love herbs of the field and take delight in the manifold harmonies of orange and gold, rose and scarlet, that are woven into these summer-clad bogs. The buck-bean unfolds its beauty in the fen, the pearls of the cross-leaved heather stud the marsh everywhere; through the ling and golden furze little tormentils and the starry bed-straw work a mosaic of loveliness, and small things such as the marsh-violet, butterwort, red sundew, and campanula add their blossoms and colours to the texture of the peat-cuttings.

My friend Mr. James Lane Allen has noted to me a fact immensely interesting in connection with the vernacular of this lonely land. In discussing one of my novels, he declared that many a word long since vanished from polite conversation, but yet happily preserved on Dartmoor from the frostbite of Board Schools, was perfectly familiar to him in the blue grass regions of Kentucky. The fact gave me unbounded pleasure, and it was good to think how

Photo by] [*F. Frith and Co., Reigate.*

TURFING FOR PEAT.

Hosted by GENUKI

Photo by] [*T. Lugg, Okehampton.*

A GENERAL VIEW OF THE ARTILLERY CAMP AT OKEHAMPTON.

fragments of pure Celtic or Anglo-Saxon, that left these shores when the *Mayflower* sailed from Plymouth, have survived in America, and still shall be found there upon the lips of the husbandmen in regions sequestered.

Language is a golden link that spelling cannot break, and long may fine phrases marked in dictionaries as obsolete or obsolescent still flourish upon the soil!

There is a great, brown scad of peat upon my fire to-day, for to me its sweet, sharp, and indescribable odour comes laden with fragrance above that of incense or aromatic gum. The red heart of the peat glows with ardour, and above it, as though fire had freed some little Dartmoor pixy long prisoned in the bog, an aureola of turquoise flame leaps and sparkles.

And the smoke paints familiar pictures for me from the past: wide heaths, forlorn and hog-backed hills, glimmering pools and inky ridges, where the cotton-grass flutters danger signals, where the curlew wheels and cries to her young, where amethystine heather lights the waste places, where asphodels flame along the stream; where the ice-cold fountain bursts from her sphagnum bed and goes glittering to meet the river below.

Far away, under a giant tor, that piles grey granite to the skyline, and wreathes its peak and pinnacles with mist, the Dartmoor farmer has his home. That black speck on the hill is the man himself; that scarlet point near the dwelling-place is his wife's red petticoat, where she stands and spreads washing upon the stones; those atoms running hither and thither, like ants, are her babies, born in this loneliness, and as unfamiliar as the colts upon the hill with any other existence.

So they live, while the huge pages of Nature's book lie outspread around them; and from her granite archives, from her messages cried by western winds and written on the curtains of the rain, from her snow and ice and curdled agonies of winter, they glean unconsciously the art of living. Here Nature is sole lady of the land, and only by obedience, by faithfulness, by discipline, shall man win a measure of welfare and justify his existence in her uplifted courts.

Photo by] [*E. J. Saunders, Winkleigh.*

REPELLING A CAVALRY ATTACK ON DARTMOOR.

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AYESHA

THE RETURN OF "SHE."

By H. RIDER HAGGARD.*

SYNOPSIS OF FOREGOING CHAPTERS.—The return of "She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed" is recorded by Ludwig Horace Holly, the friend of that Leo Vincey whom Ayesha the beautiful loved in the awful tombs of Kôr. When the record begins, the two men are living in an old house remote upon the seashore of Cumberland, where they have been slowly recovering from the horror of the passing of Ayesha in the flames—a doom that seemed one of complete extinction, yet was charged with the strange last words: "I die not. I shall come again and shall once more be beautiful. I swear it—it is true." On a sullen August night, Leo is thrilled by a vision of Ayesha in all her former loveliness. She beckons him, and in a vision his spirit follows her into a realm of snowy peaks far beyond the furthest borders of Thibet. A sign in the clouds at dawn is repeated from this vision to both Leo and Holly, and together they start for Central Asia. Sixteen years of toil, struggle, and strange adventure pass, and they are still searching for "a mountain peak shaped like the Symbol of Life." After many wanderings they find themselves in a country where no European has ever set foot, on one of the spurs of the vast Cherga mountains, far eastward from Turkestan. Rescued from drowning by a beautiful woman and an aged man, they are conducted through "The Gate" into the kingdom and city of Kaloon. Their saviours, they learn, are the Khania or Queen of Kaloon, and a venerable physician of magical powers. Is this woman Ayesha? No; they conjecture her rather to be Amenartas, who wrote the "sherd" of the former chronicle. She falls in love with Leo, and he and Holly learn that her husband, the Khan, is a madman. Simbri, the magician, and Atene, the Khania, have already received a solemn charge from the "Hesea" of a "College" in the Mountain of Fire to receive two strangers and bring them safely to the Mountain. But Atene's love for Leo makes her detain the travellers awhile in Kaloon, and she even proposes that the Khan shall be murdered so that she can wed Leo. To this the Englishman replies: "I go to ask a certain question of the Oracle on yonder mountain peak. With your will or without it, I tell you that I go, and afterwards you can settle which is the stronger—the Khania of Kaloon or the Hesea of the House of Fire." The Khan himself assists the escape of the travellers for their further journey, but his jealousy has been aroused, and after they have set out on their journey to the fire-crowned Mountain he pursues them with his death-hounds. After a terrible struggle the Khan is slain. The Khania and Simbri overtake them and seek to persuade them to return, but they refuse. The Khania leaves them, saying: "We do not part thus easily. You have summoned me to the Mountain, and even to the Mountain I will follow you. Aye, and there I will meet its spirit. . . . I will match my strength and magic against hers, as it is decreed that I shall do." On the Mountain itself they meet again with Atene, who brings thither her dead husband to the burying-place of the rulers of Kaloon. From a priest, Oros, who goes with them, they learn that for thousands of years this Mountain has been the home of a peculiar fire-worship, of which the head hierophant is a woman. To the veiled figure of Hes, on her throne, the two Englishmen tell of their wandering search. In answer to the challenge of Atene, the Hesea shows them a vision of events which happened long ago in the Caves of Kôr. Picture succeeds picture until all is blank, and then she tells how Ayesha first met Kallikrates in the early ages. Suddenly she reveals herself as Ayesha; but to remove all doubt she unveils before them, revealing herself in all her withered age. Atene bids Leo choose between her and Ayesha. Leo then kneels down and kisses the wrinkled head. At which Atene says: "Thou hast chosen. Take now thy bride and let me hence." Ayesha then begins to pray aloud, to some unseen Power, for the return of her former loveliness, and suddenly she is transfigured into radiant beauty once again, and claims Leo for the man whom she loved of old. Atene is baffled in a sudden attack upon the mysterious creature's life. Led by Oros to the Sanctuary, where, before a white-robed company of priests and priestesses, Ayesha is seated as a queen on a throne, they take part in a ceremony of betrothal, after which Ayesha bids them leave her alone awhile. During the weeks that follow, Ayesha is very miserable, and though Leo continually implores her to rescind her decree and marry him, she only says that it is not wise that she shall take him as a husband until his physical being has been impregnated with the mysterious virtue of the Vapour of Life. Presently Oros, the priest, comes with the news that the people of Kaloon have two great armies rising against Ayesha, gathered by the Khania Atene. Ayesha commands Oros to send round the Fire of Hes to every chief and bid the tribes assemble. On Leo questioning her as to the expenditure of sums of money for the preparation for war, should they be involved, Ayesha conducts the two Englishmen down passages to her laboratory, where they see two priests smelting metal, and by marvellous preparation manufacturing gold that will supply all their needs.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PROPHECY OF ATENE.

ON the day following this strange experience of the iron that was turned to gold, some great service was held in the Sanctuary—as we understood, "to consecrate the war." We did not attend it, but that night we ate together as usual. Ayesha was moody at the meal; that is, she varied from sullenness to laughter.

"Know you," she said, "that to-day I was an Oracle, and those fools of the Mountain sent their medicine-men to ask of the Hesea how the battle would go, and which of them would be slain, and which gain honour. And I—I could not tell them, but juggled with my words, so that they might take them as they would. How the battle will go I know well, for I shall direct it; but the future—ah! that I cannot read better than thou canst, my Holly, and that is ill indeed. For me, the past and all the present lie bathed in light reflected from that black wall—the future."

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Then she fell to brooding, and looking up at length with an air of entreaty, said to Leo—

"Wilt thou not hear my prayer, and bide where thou art for some few days, or even go a-hunting? Do so, and I will stay with thee, and send Holly and Oros to command the Tribes in this petty fray."

"I will not," answered Leo, trembling with indignation, for this plan of hers that I should be sent out to war, while he bided in safety in a temple, moved him, a man brave to rashness, who, although he disapproved of it in theory, loved fighting for its own sake also, to absolute rage.

"I say, Ayesha, that I will not," he repeated; "moreover, that if thou leavest me here, I will find my way down the Mountain alone and join the battle."

"Then come," she answered, "and on thine own head be it! Nay, not on thine, beloved; on mine, on mine."

After this, by some strange reaction, she became like a merry girl, laughing more than I have ever seen her do, and telling us many tales of the far, far past, but none that were sad or tragic. It was very strange to sit and listen to her while she spoke of people, one or two of them known as names in history, and many others who never have been heard of, that had trod this earth, and with whom she was familiar over two thousand years ago. Yet she told us anecdotes of their loves and hates, their strength or weaknesses, all of them touched with some tinge of humorous satire, or illustrating the comic vanity of human aims and aspirations.

At length her talk took a deeper and more personal note. She spoke of her searchings after truth; of how, aching for wisdom, she had explored the religions of her day and refused them one by one; of how she had preached in Jerusalem and been stoned by the Doctors of the Law. Of how also she had wandered back to Arabia and, being rejected by her own people as a reformer, had travelled on to Egypt, and at the court of the Pharaoh of that time met a famous magician, half-charlatan and half-seer, who, because she was far-seeing—"clairvoyant," we should call it—instructed her in his art so well that soon she became his master and forced him to obey her.

Then, as though she were unwilling to reveal too much, suddenly Ayesha's history passed from Egypt to Kôr. She spoke to Leo of his arrival there, a wanderer who was named Kallikrates, hunted by savages and accompanied by the Egyptian Amenartas, whom she appeared to have known and hated in her own country, and of how she entertained them. Yes, she even told of a supper that the three of them had eaten together on the evening before they started to discover the Place of Life, and of an evil prophecy that this royal Amenartas had made as to the issue of their journey.

"Aye," Ayesha said, "it was such a silent night as this, and such a meal as this we ate, and Leo, not so greatly changed, save that he was beardless then and younger, was at my side. Where thou sittest, Holly, sat the royal Amenartas, a very fair woman; yes, even more beautiful than I before I dipped me in the Essence; foresighted also, though not so learned as I had grown. From the first we hated each other, and more than ever now, when she guessed how I had learned to look upon thee, her lover, Leo; for her husband thou never wast, who didst flee too fast for marriage. She knew also that the struggle between us which had begun of old and afar was for centuries and generations, and that until the end should declare itself neither of us could harm the other, who both had sinned to win thee, that wast appointed by Fate to be the lodestone of our souls. Then Amenartas spoke and said—

"'Lo! to my sight, Kallikrates, the wine in thy cup is turned to blood, and that knife in thy hand, O daughter of Yarâb'—for so she named me—'drips red blood. Aye, and this place is a sepulchre, and thou, O Kallikrates, sleepest here; nor can she, thy murderess, kiss back the breath of life into those cold lips of thine.'

"So indeed it came about as was ordained," added Ayesha reflectively, "for I slew thee in yonder Place of Life—yes, in my madness I slew thee, because thou wouldst not or couldst not understand the change that had come over me, and shrankest from my loveliness like a blind bat from the splendour of flame, hiding thy face in the tresses of her dusky hair—— Why, what is it now, thou Oros? Can I never be rid of thee for an hour?"

"O Hes, a writing from the Khania Atene," the priest said, with his deprecating bow.

"Break the seal and read," she answered carelessly. "Perchance she has repented of her folly and makes submission."

So he read—

"To the Hesea of the College on the Mountain, known as Ayesha upon earth, and in the household of the Over-world whence she has been permitted to wander, as 'Star-that-hath-fallen——'"

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"'Look, yonder is the mouth of that gorge where lived the cat-worshipping sorcerer.'"

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"A pretty-sounding name, forsooth!" broke in Ayesha. "Ah! but, Atene, set stars rise again—even from the Under-world. Read on, thou Oros."

"Greetings, O Ayesha. Thou who art very old, hast gathered much wisdom in the passing of the centuries, and with other powers, that of making thyself seem fair in the eyes of men blinded by thine arts. Yet one thing thou lackest that I have—vision of those happenings which are not yet. Know, O Ayesha, that I and my uncle, the great seer, have searched the heavenly books to learn what is written there of the issue of this war.

"This is written: For me, death, whereat I rejoice. For thee, a spear cast by thine own hand. For the land of Kaloon, blood and ruin bred of thee!

"ATENE,
"Khania of Kaloon."

Ayesha listened in silence, but her lips did not tremble, nor her cheek pale. To Oros she said proudly—

"Say to the messenger of Atene that I have received her message, and ere long will answer it, face to face with her in her palace of Kaloon. Go, priest, and disturb me no more."

When Oros had departed, she turned to us and said—

"That tale of mine of long ago was well fitted to this hour, for as Amenartas prophesied of ill, so does Atene prophesy of ill, and Amenartas and Atene are one. Well, let the spear fall, if fall it must, and I will not flinch from it who know that I shall surely triumph at the last. Perhaps the Khania does but think to frighten me with a cunning lie; but if she has read aright, then be sure, beloved, that it is still well with us, since none can escape their destiny, nor can our bond of union, which was fashioned with the universe that bears us, ever be undone.

"I tell thee, Leo, that out of the confusions of our lives and deaths order shall yet be born. Behind the mask of cruelty shine Mercy's tender eyes; and the wrongs of this rough and twisted world are but hot, blinding sparks which stream from the all-righting sword of pure, eternal Justice. The heavy lives we see and know are only links in a golden chain that shall draw us safe to the haven of our rest; steep and painful steps are they whereby we climb to the allotted palace of our joy. Henceforth I fear no more, and fight no more against that which must befall. For I say we are but winged seeds blown down the gales of fate and change to the appointed garden where we shall grow, filling its blest air with the immortal fragrance of our bloom.

"Leave me now, Leo, and sleep awhile for we ride at dawn."

* * * * *

It was midday on the morrow when we moved down the Mountain-side with the army of the Tribes, fierce and savage-looking men. The scouts were out before us, then came the great body of their cavalry mounted on wiry horses, while to right and left and behind, the foot-soldiers marched in regiments, each under the command of its own chief.

Ayesha, veiled now—for she would not show her beauty to these wild folk—rode in the midst of the horsemen on a white mare of matchless speed and shape. With her went Leo and myself, Leo on the Khan's black horse, and I on another not unlike it, though thicker built. About us were a bodyguard of armed priests and a regiment of chosen soldiers, among them those hunters that Leo had saved from Ayesha's wrath, and who were now attached to his person.

We were merry, all of us, for in the crisp air of late autumn flooded with sunlight, the fears and forebodings that had haunted us in those gloomy, firelit caves were forgotten. Moreover, the tramp of thousands of armed men and the excitement of coming battle thrilled our nerves.

Not for many a day had I seen Leo look so vigorous and happy. Of late he had grown somewhat thin and pale, probably from causes that I have suggested; but now his cheeks were red and his eyes shone bright again. Ayesha also seemed joyous, for the moods of this strange woman were as fickle as those of Nature's self, and varied as a landscape varies under the sunshine or the shadow. Now she was noon and now dark night; now dawn, now evening; and now thoughts came and went in the blue depths of her eyes like vapours wafted across the summer sky, and in the press of them her sweet face changed and shimmered as broken water shimmers beneath the beaming stars.

"Too long," she said, with a little, thrilling laugh, "have I been shut in the bowels of sombre mountains, companied only by mutes and savages, or by melancholy, chanting priests, and now I am glad to look upon the world again. How beautiful are the snows above, and the brown slopes below, and the

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broad plains beyond that roll away to those bordering hills! How glorious is the sun, eternal as myself! how sweet the keen air of heaven!

"Believe me, Leo, more than twenty centuries have gone by since I was seated on a steed, and yet thou seest I have not forgot my horsemanship, though this beast cannot match those Arabs that I rode in the wide deserts of Arabia. Oh! I remember how at my father's side I galloped down to war against the marauding Bedouins, and how with my own hand I speared their chieftain and made him cry for mercy. One day I will tell thee of that father of mine; for I was his darling, and though we have been long apart, I hold his memory dear and look forward to our meeting.

"Look, yonder is the mouth of that gorge where lived the cat-worshipping sorcerer who would have murdered both of you because thou, Leo, didst throw his familiar to the fire. It is strange, but several of the Tribes of this Mountain and of the lands behind it make cats their gods, or divine by means of them. I think that the first Rassen, the general of Alexander, must have brought the practice here from Egypt. Of this Macedonian Alexander I could tell thee much, for he was almost a contemporary of mine, and when I last was born, the world still rang with the fame of his great deeds.

"It was Rassen who on the Mountain supplanted the primeval fire-worship whereof the flaming pillars which light its Sanctuary remain as monuments, by that of Hes, or Isis—or, rather, blended the two in one. Doubtless among the priests in his army were some of Pasht or Sekket the Cat-headed, and these brought with them their secret cult, that to-day has dwindled down to the vulgar divinations of savage sorcerers. Indeed, I remember dimly that it was so, for I was the first Hesea of this Temple, and journeyed hither with that same general Rassen, a relative of mine."

Now both Leo and I looked at her wonderingly, and I could see that she was watching us through her veil. As usual, however, it was I whom she reproved, since Leo might think and do what he willed, and still escape her anger.

"Thou, Holly," she said quickly, "who art ever of a cavilling and suspicious mind, remembering what I said but now, believest that I lie to thee."

I protested that I was only reflecting upon an apparent variation between two statements.

"Play not with words," she answered; "in thy heart thou didst write me down a liar, and I take that ill. Know, foolish man, that when I said that the Macedonian Alexander lived before me, I meant before this present life of mine. In the existence that preceded it, though I outlasted him by thirty years, we were born in the same summer, and I knew him well, for I was the Oracle whom he consulted most upon his wars, and to my wisdom he owed his victories. Afterwards we quarrelled, and I left him and pushed forward with Rassen. From that day the bright star of Alexander began to wane."

At this Leo made a sound that resembled a whistle. In a very agony of apprehension, beating back the criticisms and certain recollections of the strange tale of the old abbot, Kou-en, which would rise within me, I asked quickly—

"And dost thou, Ayesha, remember well all that befell thee in this former life?"

"Nay, not well," she answered meditatatively; "only the greater facts, and those I have for the most part recovered by that study of secret things which thou callest vision or magic. For instance, my Holly, I recall that thou wast living in that life. Indeed, I seem to see an ugly philosopher clad in a dirty robe and filled both with wine and the learning of others, who disputed with Alexander till he grew wroth with him and caused him to be banished, or drowned: I forget which."

"I suppose that I was not called Diogenes?" I asked tartly, suspecting, perhaps not without cause, that Ayesha was amusing herself by fooling me.

"No," she replied gravely, "I do not think that was thy name. The Diogenes thou speakest of was a much more famous man, one of real if crabbed wisdom; moreover, he did not indulge in wine. I am mindful of very little of that life, however; not of more, indeed, than are many of the followers of the prophet Buddha, whose doctrines I have studied, and of whom thou, Holly, hast spoken to me so much. Maybe we did not meet while it endured. Still, I recollect that the Valley of Bones, where I found thee, my Leo, was the place where a great battle was fought between the Fire-priests with their vassals, the Tribes of the Mountain, and the army of Rassen aided by the people of Kaloon. For between these and the Mountain, in old days as now, there was enmity, since in this present war history does but rewrite itself."

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"So thou thyself wast our guide?" said Leo, looking at her sharply.

"Aye, Leo, who else? though it is not wonderful that thou didst not know me beneath those deathly wrappings. I was minded to wait and receive thee in the Sanctuary, yet when I learned that at length both of you had escaped Atene and drew near, I could restrain myself no more, but came forth thus hideously disguised. Yes, I was with you even at the river's bank, and though you saw me not, there sheltered you from harm.

"Leo, I yearned to look upon thee and to be certain that thy heart had not changed, although until the allotted time thou mightest not hear my voice nor see my face who wert doomed to undergo that sore trial of thy faith. Of Holly also I desired to learn whether his wisdom could pierce through my disguise, and how near he stood to truth. It was for this reason that I suffered him to see me draw the lock from the satchel on thy breast and to hear me wail over thee yonder in the Rest-house. Well, he did not guess so ill; but thou, thou knewest me—in thy sleep—knewest me as I am, and not as I seemed to be; yes," she added softly, "and didst say certain sweet words which I remember well."

"Then beneath that shroud was thine own face?" asked Leo again, for he was very curious on this point—"the same lovely face I see to-day?"

"Mayhap—as thou wilt," she answered coldly; "also it is the spirit that matters, not the outward seeming, though men in their blindness think otherwise. Perchance my face is but as thy heart fashions it, or as my will presents it to the sight and fancy of its beholders. But hark! The scouts have touched."

As Ayesha spoke, a sound of distant shouting was borne upon the wind, and presently we saw a fringe of horsemen falling back slowly upon our foremost line. It was only to report, however, that the skirmishers of Atene were in full retreat. Indeed, a prisoner whom they brought with them, on being questioned by the priests, confessed at once that the Khania had no mind to meet us upon the holy Mountain. She proposed to give battle on the river's farther bank, having for a defence its waters which we must ford, a decision that showed good military judgment.

So it happened that on this day there was no fighting.

All that afternoon we descended the slopes of the Mountain, more swiftly by far than we had climbed them after our long flight from the city of Kaloon. Before sunset we came to our prepared camping-ground, a wide and sloping plain that ended at the crest of the Valley of Dry Bones, where in past days we had met our mysterious guide. This, however, we did not reach through the secret mountain tunnel along which she had led us, the shortest way by miles, as Ayesha told us now, since it was unsuited to the passage of an army.

Bending to the left, we circled round a number of unclimbable kopies, beneath which that tunnel passed, and so at length arrived upon the brow of the dark ravine where we could sleep safe from attack by night.

Here a tent was pitched for Ayesha, but as it was the only one, Leo and I with our guard bivouacked among some rocks at a distance of a few hundred yards. When she found that this must be so, Ayesha was very angry and spoke bitter words to the chief who had charge of the food and baggage, although he, poor man, knew nothing of tents.

Also she blamed Oros, who replied meekly that he had thought us captains accustomed to war and its hardships. But most of all she was angry with herself, who had forgotten this detail, and until Leo stopped her with a laugh of vexation, went on to suggest that we should sleep in the tent, since she had no fear of the rigours of the Mountain cold.

The end of it was that we supped together outside—or, rather, Leo and I supped, for as there were guards around us, Ayesha did not even lift her veil.

That evening Ayesha was disturbed and ill at ease, as though new fears which she could not overcome assailed her. At length she seemed to conquer them by some effort of her will, and announced that she was minded to sleep and thus refresh her soul—the only part of her, I think, which ever needed rest. Her last words to us were—

"Sleep you also, sleep sound, but be not astonished, my Leo, if I send to summon both of you during the night, since in my slumbers I may find new counsels, and need to speak of them to thee ere we break camp at dawn."

Thus we parted; but ah! little did we guess how and where the three of us would meet again.

* * * * *

We were weary and soon fell fast asleep beside our camp-fire, for, knowing that the

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"He poured some strong fluid down my throat."

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whole army guarded us, we had no fear. I remember watching the bright stars which shone in the immense vault above me, until they paled in the pure light of the risen moon, now somewhat past her full, and hearing Leo mutter drowsily from beneath his fur rug that Ayesha was quite right, and that it was pleasant to be in the open air again, as he was tired of caves.

After that I knew no more until I was awakened by the challenge of a sentry in the distance; then after a pause, a second challenge from the officer of our own guard. Another pause, and a priest stood bowing before us, the flickering light from the fire playing upon his shaven head and face, which I seemed to recognise.

"I"—and he gave a name that was familiar to me, but which I forget—"am sent, my lords, by Oros, who commands me to say that the Hesea would speak with you both and at once."

Now Leo sat up yawning and asked what was the matter. I told him, whereon he said he wished that Ayesha could have waited till daylight, then added—

"Well, there is no help for it. Come on, Horace," and he rose to follow the messenger.

The priest bowed again and said—

"The commands of the Hesea are that my lords should bring their weapons and their guard."

"What!" grumbled Leo, "to protect us for a walk of a hundred yards through the heart of an army?"

"The Hesea," explained the man, "has left her tent; she is in the gorge yonder, studying the line of advance."

"How do you know that?" I asked.

"I do not know it," he replied. "Oros told me so, that is all; and therefore the Hesea bade my lords bring their guard, for she is alone."

"Is she mad," ejaculated Leo, "to wander about in such a place at midnight? Well, it is like her."

I, too, thought it was like her, who did nothing that others would have done; and yet I hesitated. Then I remembered that Ayesha had said she might send for us; also I was sure that if any trick had been intended, we should not have been warned to bring an escort. So we called the guard—there were twelve of them—took our spears and swords, and started.

We were challenged by both the first and second lines of sentries, and I noticed that as we gave them the password, the last picket, who of course recognised us, looked astonished. Still, if they had doubts, they did not dare to express them. So we went on.

Now we began to descend the sides of the ravine by a very steep path, with which the priest, our guide, seemed to be curiously familiar, for he went down it as though it were the stairway of his own house.

"A strange place to take us to at night," said Leo doubtfully, when we were near the bottom, and the chief of the bodyguard, that great, red-bearded hunter who had been mixed up in the matter of the snow-leopard, also muttered some words of remonstrance. Whilst I was trying to catch what he said, of a sudden something white walked into the patch of moonlight at the foot of the ravine, and we saw that it was the veiled figure of Ayesha herself. The chief saw her also and said contentedly—

"Hes! Hes!"

"Look at her," grumbled Leo, "strolling about in that haunted hole as though it were Hyde Park"; and on he went at a run.

The figure turned and beckoned to us to follow her as she glided forward, picking her way through the skeletons which were scattered about upon the lava bed of the cleft. Thus she went on into the shadow of the opposing cliff that the moonlight did not reach. Here in the wet season a stream trickled down a path which it had cut through the rock in the course of centuries, and the grit that it had brought with it was spread about the lava floor of the ravine, so that many of the bones were almost completely buried in the sand.

These, I noticed, as we stepped into the shadow, were more numerous than usual just here, for on all sides I saw the white crowns of skulls, or the projecting ends of ribs and thigh bones. Doubtless, I thought to myself, that streamway made a road to the plain above, and in some past battle, the fighting around it was very fierce and the slaughter great.

Here Ayesha had halted and was engaged in the contemplation of this boulder-strewn path, as though she meditated making use of it that day. Now we drew near to her, and the priest who guided us fell back with our guard, leaving us to go forward alone, since they dared not approach the Hesea unbidden. Leo was somewhat in advance of me, seven or eight yards perhaps, and I heard him say—

"Why dost thou venture into such places at night, Ayesha, unless, indeed, it is not possible for any harm to come to thee?"

She made no answer, only turned and

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opened her arms wide, then let them fall to her side again. Whilst I wondered what this signal of hers might mean, from the shadows about us came a strange, rustling sound.

I looked, and lo ! everywhere the skeletons were rising from their sandy beds. I saw their white skulls, their gleaming arm and leg bones, their hollow ribs. The long-slain army had come to life again, and look ! in their hands were the ghosts of spears !

Of course I knew at once that this was but another manifestation of Ayesha's magic powers, which some whim of hers had drawn us from our beds to witness. Yet I confess that I felt frightened. Even the boldest of men, however free from superstition, might be excused should their nerve fail them if, when standing in a churchyard at midnight, suddenly on every side they saw the dead arising from their graves. Also our surroundings were wilder and more eerie than those of any civilised burying-place.

"What new devilment of thine is this ?" cried Leo in a scared and angry voice. But Ayesha made no answer.

I heard a noise behind me and looked round. The skeletons were springing upon our bodyguard, who for their part, poor men, paralysed with terror, had thrown down their weapons and fallen, some of them, to their knees. Now the ghosts began to stab at them with their phantom spears, and I saw that beneath the blows they rolled over. The veiled figure above me pointed with her hand at Leo and said—

"Seize him, but I charge you, harm him not."

I knew the voice ; *it was that of Atene !*

Then too late I understood the trap into which we had fallen.

"Treachery !" I began to cry, and before the word was out of my lips, a particularly able-bodied skeleton silenced me with a violent blow upon the head. But though I could not speak, my senses still stayed with me for a little. I saw Leo fighting furiously with a number of men who strove to pull him down—so furiously, indeed, that his frightful efforts caused the blood to gush out of his mouth from some burst vessel in the lungs.

Then sight and hearing failed me, and thinking that this was death, I fell and remembered no more.

Why I was not killed outright I do not know, unless in their hurry the disguised soldiers thought me already dead, or perhaps that my life was to be spared also. At least, beyond the knock upon the head I received no injury.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE LOOSING OF THE POWERS.

WHEN I came to myself again, it was daylight. I saw the calm, gentle face of Oros bending over me as he poured some strong fluid down my throat that seemed to shoot through all my body and melt a curtain in my mind. I saw also that beside him stood Ayesha.

"Speak, man, speak !" she said in a terrible voice. "What has chanced here ? Thou livest ; then where is my lord ? Where hast thou hid my lord ? Tell me—or die !"

It was the vision that I saw when my senses left me in the snow of the avalanche, fulfilled to the last detail !

"Atene has taken him," I answered.

"Atene has taken him, and thou art left alive ?"

"Do not be wroth with me," I answered, "it is no fault of mine. Little wonder we were deceived after thou hadst said that thou mightest summon us ere dawn."

Then as briefly as I could I told the story.

She listened, went to where our murdered guards lay with unstained spears, and looked at them.

"Well for these that they are dead !" she exclaimed. "Now, Holly, thou seest what is the fruit of mercy. The men whose lives I gave my lord have failed him at his need."

Then she passed forward to the spot where Leo was captured. Here lay a broken sword —Leo's—that had been the Khan Rassen's, and two dead men. Both of these were clothed in some tight-fitting black garments, having their heads and faces whitened with chalk, and upon their vests a rude imitation of a human skeleton, also daubed in chalk.

"A trick fit to frighten fools with," she said contemptuously. "But oh ! that Atene should have dared to play the part of Ayesha —that she should have dared !" and she clenched her little hand. "See, surprised and overwhelmed, yet he fought well. Say ! was he hurt, Holly ? It comes upon me—no, tell me that I see amiss."

"Not much, I think," I answered doubtfully ; "a little blood was running from his mouth, no more. Look, there go the stains of it upon that rock."

"For every drop I'll take a hundred lives. By myself I swear it !" Ayesha muttered, with a groan. Then she cried in a ringing voice—

"Back and to horse, for I have deeds to do this day ! Nay, bide thou here, Holly ;

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we go a shorter path, while the army skirts the gorge. Oros, give him food and drink, and bathe that hurt upon his head. It is but a bruise, for his hood and hair are thick."

So while Oros rubbed some stinging lotion on my scalp, I ate and drank as best I could till my brain ceased to swim, for the blow, though heavy, had not fractured the bone. When I was ready, they brought the horses to us, and mounting them, slowly we scrambled up the steep bed of the water-course.

"See," Ayesha said, pointing to tracks and hoof-prints on the plain at its head, "there was a chariot awaiting him, and harnessed to it were four swift horses. Atene's scheme was clever and well laid, and I, grown oversure and careless, slept through it all!"

On this plain the army of the Tribes that had broken camp before the dawn was already gathering fast; indeed, the cavalry, if I may call them so, were assembled there to the number of about five thousand men, each of whom had a led horse. Ayesha summoned the chiefs and captains, and addressed them.

"Servants of Hes," she said, "the stranger lord, my betrothed and guest, has been tricked by a false priest, and, falling into a cunning snare, captured as a hostage. It is necessary that I follow him fast, before harm comes to him. We move down to attack the army of the Khania beyond the river. When its passage is forced, I pass on with the horsemen, for I must sleep in the city of Kaloon to-night. What sayest thou, Oros? That a second and greater army defends its walls? Man, I know it, and if there is need, that army I will destroy. Nay, stare not at me. Already they are as dead. Horsemen, you accompany me.

"Captains of the Tribes, you follow; and woe be to that man who hangs back in the hour of battle! for death and eternal shame shall be his portion, but wealth and honour to those who bear them bravely. Yes, I tell you, theirs shall be the fair land of Kaloon. You have your orders for the passing of yonder river. I, with the horsemen, take the central ford. Let the wings advance."

The chiefs answered with a cheer, for they were fierce men, whose ancestors had loved war for generations. Moreover, mad as seemed the enterprise, they trusted in their Oracle, the Hesea, and, like all hill peoples, were easily fired by the promise of rich plunder.

An hour's steady march down the slopes brought the army to the edge of the marshlands. These, as it chanced, proved no obstacle to our progress, for in that season of great drought they were quite dry, and for the same reason the shrunken river was not so impassable a defence as I feared that it would be. Still, because of its rocky bottom and steep, opposing banks, it looked formidable enough, while on the crests of those banks, in squadrons and companies of horse and foot, were gathered the regiments of Atene.

While the wings of footmen deployed to right and left, the cavalry halted in the marshes and let their horses fill themselves with the long grass, now a little browned by frost, that grew on this boggy soil, and afterwards drink some water.

All this time Ayesha stood silent, for she also had dismounted, that the mare she rode and her two led horses might graze with the others. Indeed, she spoke but once, saying—

"Thou thinkest this adventure mad, my Holly? Say, art afraid?"

"Not with thee for captain," I answered. "Still, that second army——"

"Shall melt before me like mist before the gale," she replied in a low and thrilling voice. "Holly, I tell thee thou shalt see things such as no man upon the earth has ever seen. Remember my words when I *loose the Powers* and thou followest the rent veil of Ayesha through the smitten squadrons of Kaloon. Only—what if Atene should dare to murder him? Oh, if she should dare!"

"Be comforted," I replied, wondering what she might mean by this loosing of the Powers. "I think that she loves him too well."

"I bless thee for the words, Holly, yet—I know he will refuse her, and then her hate for me and her jealous rage may overcome her love for him. Should this be so, what will avail my vengeance? Eat and drink again, Holly—nay, I touch no food until I sit in the palace of Kaloon—and look well to girth and bridle, for thou ridest far and on a wild errand. Mount thee on Leo's horse, which is swift and sure; if it dies, the guards will bring thee others."

I obeyed her as best I could, and once more bathed my head in a pool, and with the help of Oros tied a rag soaked in the liniment on the bruise, after which I felt sound enough. Indeed, the mad excitement of those minutes of waiting, and some fore-

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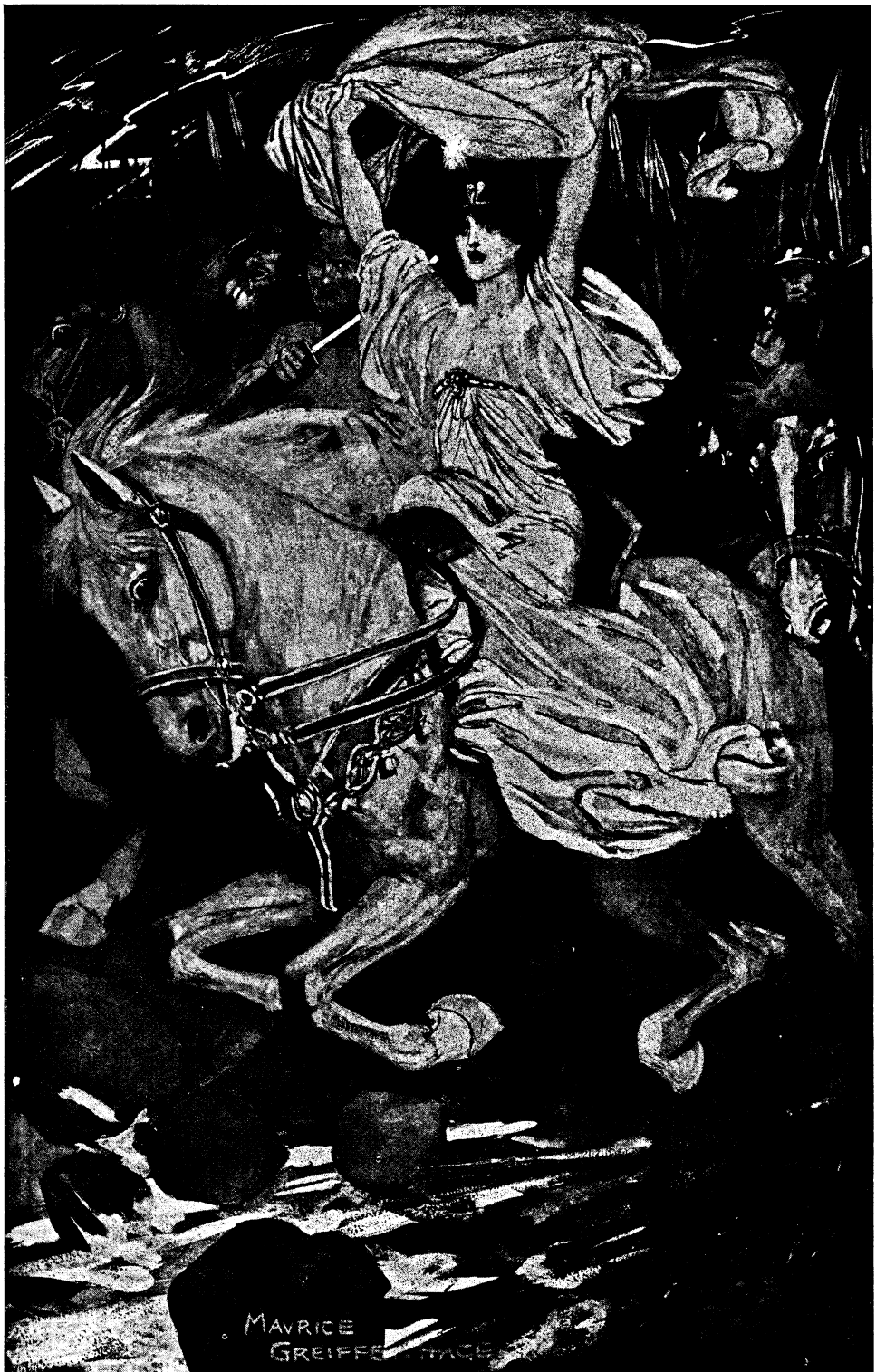

"Ayesha tore off her veil and held it on high."

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shadowing of the terrible wonders that were about to befall, made me forget my hurts.

Now, Ayesha was standing staring upwards, so that although I could not see her veiled face, I guessed that her eyes must be fixed on the sky above the Mountain-top. I was certain, also, that she was concentrating her fearful will upon an unknown object, for her whole frame quivered like a reed shaken in the wind.

It was a very strange morning—cold and clear, yet curiously still, and with a heaviness in the air such as precedes a great fall of snow, although for much snow the season was yet too early. Once or twice, too, in that utter calm, I thought that I felt everything shudder; not the ordinary trembling of earthquake, however, for the shuddering seemed to be of the atmosphere quite as much as of the land. It was as though all Nature around us were a living creature which is very much afraid.

Following Ayesha's earnest gaze, I perceived that thick, smoky clouds were gathering one by one in the clear sky above the Peak, and that they were edged, each of them, with a fiery rim. Watching these fantastic and ominous clouds, I ventured to say to her that it looked as though the weather would change—not a very original remark, but one which the circumstances suggested.

"Aye," she answered, "ere night the weather will be wilder even than my heart. No longer shall they cry for water in Kaloon! Mount, Holly, mount! The advance begins!" and unaided she sprang to the saddle of the mare that Oros brought her.

* * * * *

Then, in the midst of the five thousand horsemen, we moved down upon the ford. As we reached its brink I noted that the two divisions of Tribesmen were already entering the stream half a mile to the right and left of us. Of what befell them I can tell nothing from observation, although I learned later that they forced it after great slaughter on both sides.

In front of us was gathered the main body of the Khania's army, massed by regiments upon the further bank, while hundreds of picked men stood up to their middles in the water, waiting to spear or hamstring our horses as we advanced.

Now, uttering their wild, whistling cry, our leading companies dashed into the river, leaving us upon the bank, and soon were engaged hotly with the footmen in midstream. While this fray went on, Oros came to Ayesha and told her a spy had reported that Leo, bound in a two-wheeled carriage and accompanied by Atene, Simbri, and a guard, had passed through the enemy's camp at night, galloping furiously towards Kaloon.

"Spare thy words—I know it," she answered, and he fell back behind her.

Our squadrons gained the bank, having destroyed most of the men in the water, but as they set foot upon it the enemy charged them and drove them back with loss. Thrice they returned to the attack, and thrice were repulsed in this fashion. At length Ayesha grew impatient.

"They need a leader, and I will give them one," she said. "Come with me, my Holly," and, followed by the main body of the horsemen, she rode a little way into the river, and there waited until the shattered troops had fallen back upon us. Oros whispered to me—

"It is madness! the Hesea will be slain!"

"Thinkest thou so?" I answered. "More like that we shall be slain"—a saying at which he smiled a little more than usual and shrugged his shoulders, since, for all his soft ways, Oros was a brave man. Also I believe that he spoke to try me, knowing that his mistress would take no harm.

Ayesha held up her hand, in which there was no weapon, and waved it forwards. A great cheer answered that signal to advance, and in the midst of it this frail, white-robed woman spoke to her horse so that it plunged deep into the water.

Two minutes later, and spears and arrows were flying about us so thickly that they seemed to darken the sky. I saw men and horses fall to right and left, but nothing touched me or the white robes that floated a yard or two ahead. Five minutes, and we were gaining the further bank, and there the worst fight began.

It was fierce indeed, yet never an inch did the white robes give back; and where they went, men would follow them or fall. We were up the bank, and the enemy was packed about us, but through them we passed slowly, like a boat through an adverse sea that buffets but cannot stay it. Yes, further and further, till at last the lines ahead grew thin as the living wedge of horsemen forced its path between them—grew thin, broke, and vanished.

We had passed through the heart of the host, and leaving the Tribesmen who followed to deal with its flying fragments, rode on half a mile or so and mustered. Many were dead and more were hurt, but the command was

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issued that all sore-wounded men should fall out and give their horses to replace those that had been killed.

This was done, and presently we moved on, three thousand of us now—not more—heading for Kaloon. The trot grew to a canter, and the canter to a gallop, as we rushed forward across that endless plain, till at midday, or a little after—for this route was far shorter than that taken by Leo and myself in our devious flight from Rassen and his death-hounds—we dimly saw the city of Kaloon set upon its hill.

Now a halt was ordered, for here was a reservoir in which was still some water, whereof the horses drank, while the men ate of the food they carried with them—dried meat and barley-meal. Here, too, more spies met us, who said that the great army of Atene was posted guarding the city bridges, and that to attack it with our little force would mean destruction. But Ayesha took no heed of their words; indeed, she scarcely seemed to hear them. Only she ordered that all wearied horses should be abandoned and fresh ones mounted.

Forward again for hour after hour, in perfect silence save for the thunder of our horses' hoofs. No word spoke Ayesha, nor did her wild escort speak, only from time to time they looked over their shoulders and pointed with their red spears at the red sky behind.

I looked also, nor shall I forget its aspect. The dreadful, fire-edged clouds had grown and gathered so that beneath their shadows the plain lay almost black. They marched above us like an army in the heavens, while from time to time vaporous points shot forward, thin like swords, or massed like charging horse.

Under them a vast stillness reigned. It was as though the earth lay dead beneath their pall.

Kaloon, lit in a lurid light, grew nearer. The pickets of the foe flew homeward before us, shaking their javelins, and their mocking laughter reached us in hollow echoes. Now we saw the vast array, posted rank on rank with silken banners drooping in that stirless air, flanked and screened by glittering regiments of horse.

An embassy approached us, and at the signal of Ayesha's uplifted arm we halted. It was headed by a lord of the Court whose face I knew. He pulled rein and spoke boldly—

"Listen, Hes, to the words of Atene. Ere now the stranger lord, thy darling, is prisoner in her palace. Advance, and we destroy thee and thy little band; but if by any miracle thou shouldst conquer, then he dies. Get thee gone to thy Mountain fastness, and the Khania gives thee peace, and thy people their lives. What answer to the words of the Khania?"

Ayesha whispered to Oros, who called aloud—

"There is no answer. Go, if ye love life, for death draws near to you!"

So they went fast as their swift steeds would carry them, but for a little while Ayesha still sat lost in thought.

Presently she turned, and through her thin veil I saw that her face was white and terrible, and that the eyes in it glowed like those of a lioness at night. She said to me—hissing the words between her clenched teeth—

"Holly, prepare thyself to look into the mouth of hell. I desired to spare them if I could, I swear it; but my heart bids me be bold, to put off human pity, and use all my secret might if I would see Leo living. Holly, I tell thee they are about *to murder him!*"

Then she cried aloud: "Fear nothing, captains. Ye are but few, yet with you goes the strength of ten thousand thousand. Now follow the Hesea, and, whate'er ye meet, be not dismayed. Repeat it to the soldiers, that, fearing nothing, they follow the Hesea through yonder host and across the bridge and into the city of Kaloon."

So the chiefs rode hither and thither, crying out her words, and the savage Tribesmen answered—

"Aye, we who followed through the water will follow across the plain. Onward, Hes, for darkness swallows us!"

Now some orders were given, and the companies fell into a formation that resembled a great wedge, Ayesha herself being its very point and apex; for though Oros and I rode on either side of her, spur as we would, our horses' heads never passed her saddle-bow. In front of that dark mass she shone, a single spot of white—one snowy feather on a black torrent's breast.

A screaming bugle-note—and, like giant arms, from the shelter of some groves of trees, curved horns of cavalry shot out to surround us, while the broad bosom of the opposing army, shimmering with spears, rolled forward as a wave rolls crowned with sunlit foam; and behind it, line upon line, uncountable, lay a surging sea of men.

Our end was near. We were lost, or so it seemed.

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Ayesha tore off her veil and held it on high, flowing from her like a pennon, and lo! upon her brow blazed that wide and mystic diadem of light which once only I had seen before.

Denser and denser grew the rushing clouds above; brighter and brighter gleamed the unearthly star of light beneath. Louder and louder beat the sound of the falling hoofs of ten thousand horses. From the Mountain-peak behind us went up sudden sheets of flame; it spouted fire as a whale spouts foam.

The scene was dreadful. In front, the towers of Kaloon lurid in a monstrous sunset. Above, a gloom as of an eclipse. Around, the darkling, sunburnt plain. On it Atene's advancing army, and our rushing wedge of horsemen, destined, it would appear, to inevitable doom.

* * * * *

Ayesha let fall her rein. She tossed her arms, waving the torn, white veil as though it were a signal cast to heaven.

Instantly from the churning jaws of the unholy night above belched a blaze of answering flame, that also wavered like a rent and shaken veil in the grasp of a black hand of cloud.

Then did Ayesha roll the thunder of her might upon the Children of Kaloon. Then she called, and the Terror came, such as men had never seen and, perchance, never more will see. Awful bursts of wind tore past us, lifting the very stones and soil before them, and with the wind went hail and level, hissing rain made visible by the arrows of perpetual lightnings that leapt downwards from the sky and upwards from the earth.

It was as she had warned me. It was as though hell had broken loose upon the world, yet through that hell we rushed on unharmed. For always these furies passed before us. No arrow flew, no javelin was stained. The jagged hail was a herald of our coming; the levens that smote and stabbed were our sword and spear, while ever the hurricane roared and screamed with a million separate voices which blended to one yell of sound, hideous and indescribable.

As for the hosts about us, they melted and were gone.

Now the darkness was dense, like to that of thickest night; yet in the fierce flares of the lightnings I saw them run this way and that, and amidst the volleying, elemental voices I heard their shouts of horror and of agony. I saw horses and riders roll confused upon the ground; like storm-drifted leaves I saw their footmen piled in high and whirling heaps, while the brands of heaven struck and struck them till they sank together and grew still.

I saw the groves of trees bend, shrivel up, and vanish. I saw the high walls of Kaloon blown in and flee away, while the houses within the walls took fire, to go out beneath the torrents of the driving rain, and again take fire. I saw blackness sweep over us with great wings; and when I looked, lo! those wide wings were flame, floods of pulsing flame that flew upon the tormented air.

Blackness, utter blackness; turmoil, doom, dismay! Beneath me the labouring horse; at my side the steady crest of light which sat on Ayesha's brow, and through the tumult a clear, exultant voice that sang—

"I promised thee wild weather! Now, Holly, dost thou believe that I can loose the prisoned Powers of the world?"

* * * * *

Lo! all was past and gone, and above us shone the quiet evening sky, and before us lay the empty bridge, and beyond it the flaming city of Kaloon. But the armies of Atene, where were they? Go, ask of those great cairns that hide their bones. Go, ask it of her widowed land.

Yet of our wild company of horsemen not one was lost. After us they galloped trembling, white-lipped, like men who face to face had fought and conquered Death, but triumphant—ah, triumphant!

On the high head of the bridge Ayesha wheeled her horse, and so for one proud moment stood to welcome them. At the sight of her glorious, star-crowned countenance, which now her Tribes beheld for the first time and the last, there went up such a shout as men have seldom heard.

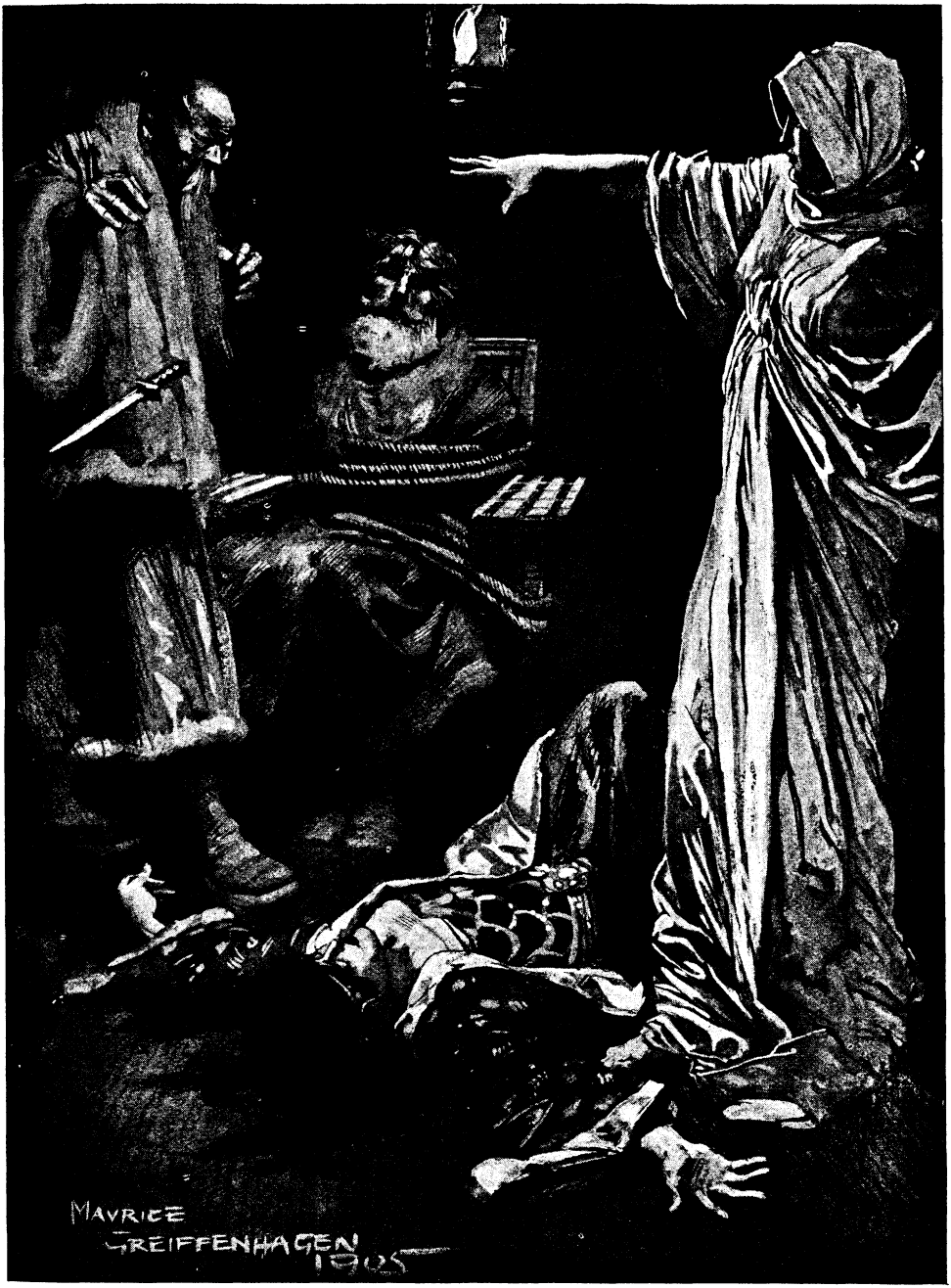
"*The Goddess!*" that shout thundered. "Worship the Goddess!"

Then she turned her horse's head again, and they followed on through the long, strait street of the burning city, up to the Palace on its crest.

As the sun set, we sped beneath its gateway. Silence in the courtyard, silence everywhere, save for the distant roar of fire and the scared howlings of the death-hounds in their kennel.

Ayesha sprang from her horse, and waving back all save Oros and myself, swept through the open doors into the halls beyond.

They were empty, every one—all were fled or dead. Yet she never paused or doubted, but, so swiftly that we scarce could follow



"Ayesha waved her arm, and the knife fell from Simbri's hand."

her, flitted up the wide stair that led to the topmost tower. Up, still up, until we reached the chamber where had dwelt Simbri the Shaman, that same chamber whence he was wont to watch his stars, in which Atene had threatened us with death.

Its door was shut and barred; still, at Ayesha's coming—yes, before the mere breath of her presence—the iron bolts snapped like twigs, the locks flew back, and inward burst that massive portal.

Now we were within the lamp-lit chamber, and this is what we saw. Seated in a chair, pale-faced, bound, yet proud and defiant-

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looking, was Leo. Over him, a dagger in his withered hand—yes, about to strike, in the very act—stood the old Shaman, and on the floor, hard by, gazing upward with wide-set eyes, dead, and still majestic in her death, lay Atene, Khania of Kaloon.

Ayesha waved her arm, and the knife fell from Simbri's hand, clattering on the marble, while in an instant he who had held it was smitten to stillness and became like a man turned to stone.

She stooped, lifted the dagger, and with a swift stroke severed Leo's bonds; then, as though overcome at last, sank on to a bench in silence. Leo rose, looking about him bewildered, and said in the strained voice of one who is weak with much suffering—

"But just in time, Ayesha. Another second, and that murderous dog"—and he pointed to the Shaman—"well, it was in time. But how went the battle, and how camest thou here through that awful hurricane? And, oh, Horace, thank Heaven they did not kill you, after all!"

"The battle went ill for some," Ayesha answered; "and I came not through the hurricane, but on its wings. Tell me now, what has befallen thee since we parted?"

"Trapped, overpowered, bound, brought here, told that I must write to thee and stop thy advance, or die—refused, of course, and then——" And he glanced at the dead body on the floor.

"And then?" repeated Ayesha.

"Then that fearful tempest, which seemed to drive me mad. Oh! if thou couldst have heard the wind howling round these battlements, tearing off their stones as though they were dry leaves; if thou hadst seen the lightnings falling thick and fast as rain——"

"They were my messengers. I sent them to save thee," said Ayesha simply.

"Atene said as much, but I did not believe her. I thought the end of the world had come, that was all. Well, she returned just now more mad even than I was, and told me that her people were destroyed, and that she could not fight against the strength of hell, but that she could send me thither, and took a knife to kill me.

"I said, 'Kill on,' for I knew that wherever I went, thou wouldst follow, and I was sick with the loss of blood from some hurt I had in that struggle, and weary of it all. So I shut my eyes, waiting for the stroke, but instead I felt her lips pressed upon my forehead, and heard her say—

"'Nay, I will not do it. Fare thee well; fulfil thou thine own destiny, as I fulfil mine. For this cast the dice have fallen against me; elsewhere it may be otherwise. I go to load them if I may.'

"I opened my eyes and looked. There Atene stood, a glass in her hand—see, it lies beside her.

"'Defeated, yet I win!' she cried, 'for I do but pass before thee to prepare the path that thou shalt tread, and to make ready thy place in the Under-world. Till we meet again, I pledge thee, for I am destroyed. Ayesha's horsemen are in my streets, and, clothed in lightnings at their head, rides Ayesha's avenging self.'

"So she drank, and fell dead—but now. Look, her breast still quivers. Afterwards, that old man would have murdered me, for, being roped, I could not resist him; but the door burst in, and thou camest. Spare him—he is of her blood, and he loved her."

Then Leo sank back into the chair where we had discovered him bound, and seemed to fall into a kind of torpor, for of a sudden he grew to look like an old man.

"Thou art sick," said Ayesha anxiously. "Oros, thy medicine—the draught I bade thee bring! Be swift, I say."

The priest bowed, and from some pocket in his ample robe produced a phial which he opened and gave to Leo, saying—

"Drink, my lord; this stuff will give thee back thy health, for it is strong."

"The stronger the better," answered Leo. Then he took the draught and emptied it.

There must have been virtue in that potion; at least, the change which it produced in him was wonderful. Within a minute his eyes grew bright again, and the colour returned into his cheeks.

"Thy medicines are very good, as I have learned of old," he said to Ayesha; "but the best of all of them is to see thee safe and victorious before me, and to know that I, who looked for death, yet live to greet thee, my beloved. There is food," and he pointed to a board upon which were meats. "Say, may I eat of them, for I starve?"

"Aye," she answered softly, "eat."

So we fell to—yes, we fell to and ate even in the presence of that dead woman who looked so royal in her death; of the old magician who stood there powerless, like a man petrified; and of Ayesha, the wondrous being that could destroy an army with the fearful weapons which were servant to her will.

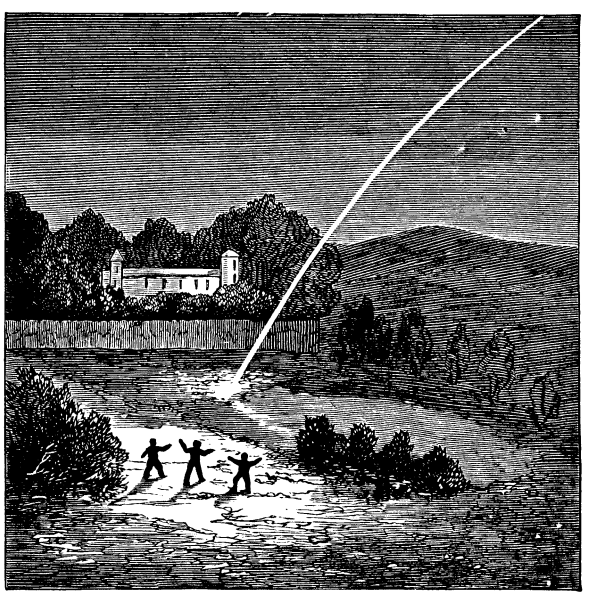
(*To be continued.*)

THINGS THAT FALL FROM THE SKY.

BY WALTER GEORGE BELL.

SOME time ago we were excited by news that a message had come to earth from Mars. It took the form of an aerolite, and dropped conveniently near the garden of Professor Jeremiah McDonald, at Binghampton, New York State. The professor was making his way home in the early morning hours, when, in a blinding flash of light, an object buried itself in the ground near him.

On being dug out, it proved to be a metallic mass which had been fused by intense heat. When cooled and broken open, we were told, "inside was found what might have been a piece of metal, on which were a number of curious marks like written characters"—which characters, it was interesting to learn, "bore some resemblance to Egyptian handwriting."



FALL OF AN AEROLITE IN STYRIA, ON JULY 31, 1859.

Mars is our neighbouring world. A popular belief has grown up in the existence of intelligent beings on Mars. So here, indeed, was a message from Mars!

A delightful story, certainly; but attempts to read this "message" can only be so much time wasted. It was the "metal inside" which racked the brains of the Yankee reporter, and suggested to him that the message had been wrapped by careful Martians in a casing of another metal, black in colour; but both are one and the same. A black casing, or rind, is common to all aerolites, and is created by fusion of the surface by the intense heat set up by friction with our atmosphere, as the aerolite dashes through to earth. As to the "message" in unreadable hieroglyphics, figures of the kind are not uncommon, and are largely due to crystallisation.

Overleaf is a drawing of an aerolite now in the British Museum, South Kensington. It fell at Victoria West, Cape Colony, in 1862, but I fancy that Mr. Lazarus Fletcher, F.R.S., the distinguished mineralogist who has care of the fine collection, would be much astonished if you suggested to him that it was a message to the Kaffirs from another world.

We are an unbelieving people. Until the early nineteenth century, the idea that stones could fall from the clear sky was generally scoffed at. History is full of records of these mysterious visitants. Travellers and missionaries brought home from Mexico, from China, from Africa, from India, traditions of sacred stones which were worshipped by superstitious natives because, they said, they had come from the heavens, and often the good men laboured in vain to convince them of their error.

A Mogul emperor had a knife, a dagger, and a sword fashioned out of a mass of iron which fell at Jullunder, in the Punjab, in 1620. The Court poet went into rhapsodies over the event, as an example of his master's world-subduing authority. A blackened stone which fell from the skies is to this day revered by Moslems as one of their holiest relics, and is preserved at Mecca, built into the north-eastern corner of the central sanctuary, the Kaaba. Such travellers' tales, when first told, raised only the incredulous smile.

Native veneration for the "heaven stones"

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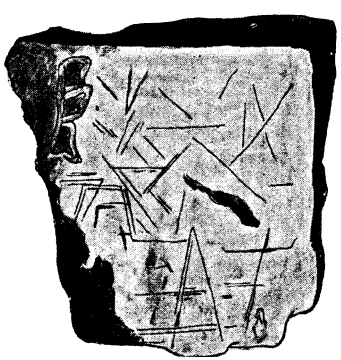
takes, at times, a severely practical turn, as this little story tells. A stone fell in 1855 on the coast opposite Zanzibar. It was picked up by some children herding cattle, and all the tribe gathered to anoint it with oil and ornament it with stuffs and pearls, as a true divinity come from heaven. The missionary's warnings were unheeded. One day the warlike Massai attacked the tribe and slaughtered them; whereupon the survivors lost faith in their fetish and sold it to a European trader, and it now reposes in the Munich Museum.

It was the fall of an aerolite near the village of Wold Newton, on the Yorkshire Wolds, just over a century ago, which helped to rouse the scientific world from its prevailing unbelief. On a Sunday afternoon, December 13th, 1795, in misty weather, thunder and lightning being at a distance, suddenly there came a noise like an explosion. George Sawden, a carpenter, was passing within fifty yards of the spot where the aerolite fell to earth. John Shipley, a farm servant, was so near that he was struck by some of the earth thrown up by the stone as it plunged into the ground. It excavated a hole nineteen inches deep and more than three feet in diameter, and was found embedded fast in the chalk rock.



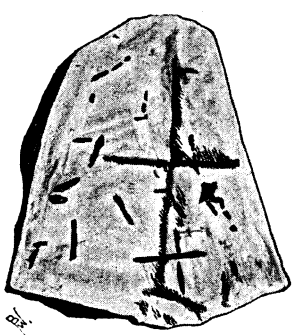
METEORITE IN BRITISH MUSEUM.

Some of those who witnessed the fall, anxious for a plausible explanation, spread the tale that it was a cannon-ball shot by a shipload of French giants, who were supposed to have landed to invade the island. Others, attending sheep on the farms, who had seen the stone moving down the clouds as it passed from the sea-coast, made haste to the top of their church tower at Reighton to watch where it came to earth. Two sons of the Vicar of Wold Newton heard the aerolite whizz over their heads, and they were among the first on the spot where it fell.

This aerolite, which is somewhat larger than a man's head, is now to be seen at the British Museum. It has a black, vitrified surface, with marks which denote its having been exposed to the action of intense heat. Visitors to Bridlington Quay who care to take a ten-mile walk may find the spot where the aerolite fell, easily identified by a column of brick, which bears the following inscription :—

HERE
on this spot, December 13th, 1795,
fell from the atmosphere
AN EXTRAORDINARY STONE.
In breadth 28 inches,
In length 30 inches,
and
Whose weight was 56 pounds.
This Column
was erected by
Edmund Topham.
1799.

This Mr. Topham, who has thus immortalised himself, nearly had one of his chimneys knocked off by the fall.



THE "MESSAGE FROM MARS."

Another famous stone fell at Rowton, Shropshire, on the afternoon of April 20th, 1876, under very similar circumstances. A strange, rumbling noise, followed by a startling explosion, was heard among the villages over a large area eight or nine miles north of the Wrekin. The stone was not seen to fall, but about half an hour later a farmer noticed that the ground in one of his grass fields had been disturbed. Probing a hole in the soil with his stick, he alighted upon the aerolite, still warm, about eighteen inches below the surface. Some men working in a neighbouring field had heard it whizz by.

The Rowton stone is not a large mass, weighing but seven and three-quarter pounds, but it is remarkable for being composed of almost pure iron. The Duke of Cleveland, upon whose property it descended, presented the stone to the British Museum.

The last stone that fell in the United Kingdom came down at Crumlin, a village ten miles from Belfast, on September 13th, 1902. The British Association was in session at Belfast at the time, and great was the interest which the fall occasioned. Mr. Fletcher secured the stone for the British Museum, where anyone may see it to-day. The aerolite penetrated the soil to

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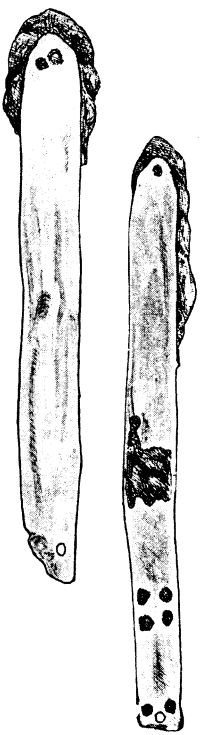
a depth of eighteen inches, when it struck a larger terrestrial stone lying there, which stayed its descent, and doubtless is responsible for the crack which goes half-way through it. Bright particles of metal and iron alloy fleck the stony material of which this aerolite is mostly composed. Its weight is 9 lb. 5½ oz.

Great Britain and Ireland occupy such a small portion of the world's surface that it is not surprising that of our national collection, representing nearly five hundred aerolites and meteoritic irons, but some half-dozen were netted at home. A picture on an earlier page, taken by kind permission from Dr. Phipson's "Meteors, Aerolites, and Falling Stars" (Lovell, Reeve and Co.), illustrates the descent of an aerolite in Styria, and is of peculiar interest, as it was drawn immediately after the fall, at the instance of three observers, shown wildly gesticulating in the foreground, who witnessed this remarkable occurrence.

Although the aerolite came down in such a fine streak of light, it was a very small one, weighing only a few ounces. It was seen to fall about half-past nine in the evening of July 31st, 1859, by three inhabitants of the bourg of Montpreis. A whizzing or hissing noise accompanied the fall, which terminated in a slight detonation. All three men ran to the spot where the object fell, and found a small cavity in the soil, from which they extricated three small meteoric stones the size of nuts, and a quantity of black powder. For five or six seconds the stones continued to glow with heat, and for upwards of a quarter of an hour they could not be touched without burning the hand.



ESQUIMO IMPLEMENTS OF BONE AND METEORIC IRON.

It has been conjectured that the worship of stones which fell from the skies was the earliest form of idolatry. In Eastern lands such stones are still objects of special veneration.

Eastern fears and superstitions have, at times, caused terrible trouble to scientific men. A fall of an aerolite in an Indian jungle was actually observed by a mild Hindu. The stone was there, its meteoritic character was undoubted; but between fright at the noise its fall made, and the danger which he believed himself to have narrowly escaped, the man could tell nothing coherent about it. Of one thing only he was sure—that it had hunted him through the jungle for two hours before it fell to earth!

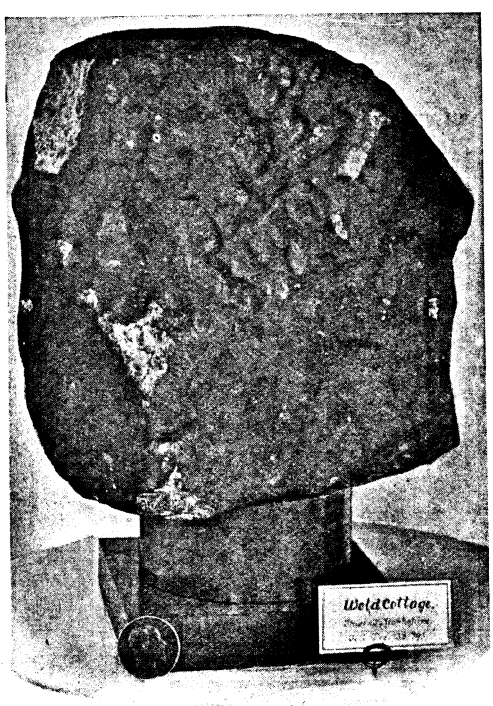


Photo by] [*P. G. Luck.*

THE FAMOUS WOLD NEWTON METEORIC STONE.

A penny placed against the pedestal gives some idea of the size of the stone.

Many stones must fall into the sea. Sailors have described their weird appearance in the night watches, but, unfortunately, the trail of the sea-serpent is over all salt-water yarns, and they get discredited. One such fall may be quoted here, because it was near at home—at Dover, December 17th, 1852, and was witnessed by a naval officer, Lieutenant Higginson.

"At three minutes past five in the morning," he writes, "the meteor having spanned the channel from S.E. to N.W., upon approaching the land, evidently throwing off portions of its substance as it passed through the atmosphere with a terrific rushing noise, the nucleus suddenly exploded with a report similar to a heavy clap of thunder. The great body of the meteorite seemed to fall

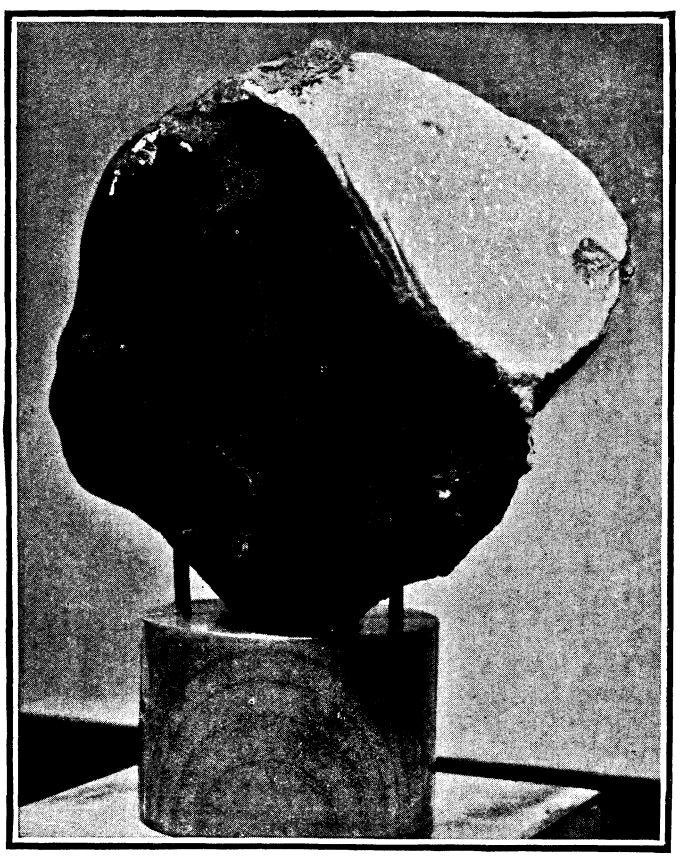
into the water, about half a mile from the land—as indicated by a vast volume of spray which rose foaming in the distance." Some fragments of the exploded aerolite were picked up along the sea-beach.

On February 10th, 1896, an aerolite exploded over Madrid. It appeared at 9.29 a.m., in broad sunshine—a vivid glare of blinding light, followed immediately by a loud report. Many windows were broken by concussion, a wall at one of the Embassies collapsed, women shrieked and fainted, and men fell on their knees in the street, praying that the Divine wrath might be diverted from the city. Pieces were afterwards picked up of the aerolite, which is believed to have burst at a height of some fifteen miles above the city.

Thus there is actual danger to life from sky-falls, but so small are the risks that they do not give promise of profitable insurance business. Ancient Chinese records mention a catastrophe caused by an aerolite on January 14th, 616 B.C., which broke several chariots and killed ten men. Of still greater antiquity is a reference in the tenth chapter of the Book of Joshua, where we read that during the flight of the Canaanites, after the battle of Gibeon, great stones were cast down from heaven, so that there were more slain by them than by the sword. In the ordinary acceptance this would refer to a shower of meteoritic stones, though the Biblical text may point rather to a prolonged shower of large hailstones. The Talmud has a pretty legend of a plague of hailstones in Egypt, which, as they touched the ground, burst into flames. There was a fall of stones in London on May 18th, 1680, but all trace of them has been lost.

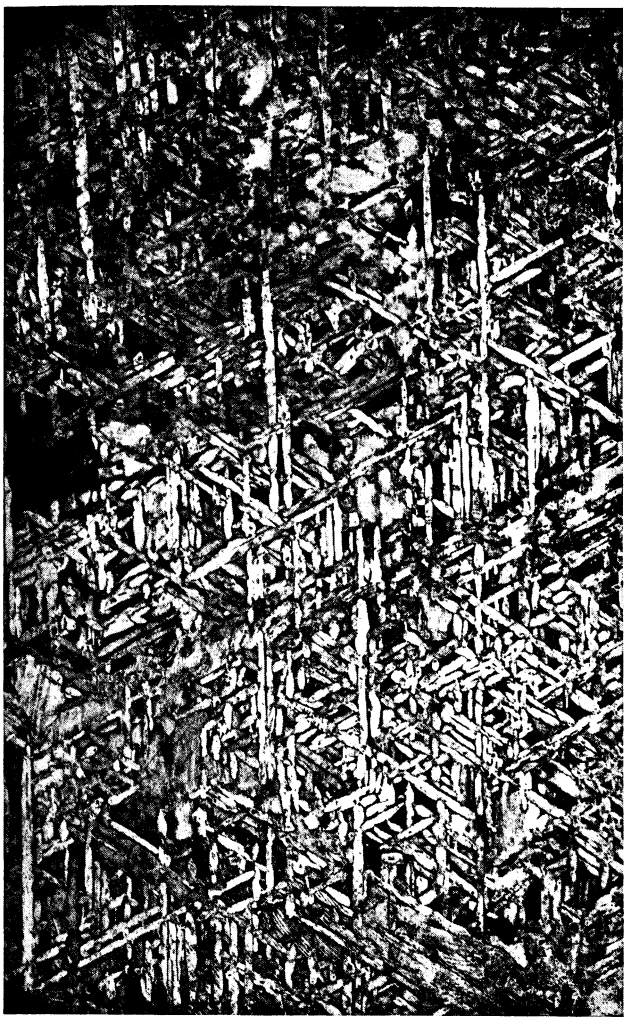
A curiously quaint account of a sky-fall at Hatford, near Oxford, on April 9th, 1628, is contained in a rare tract in the British Museum. The writer, whose fancy is clearly inspired by terror, describes the "furious tearing of the Ayre," wherein it appeared to him that "the whole order of this thunder carried a kind of majesticall state with it, for it maintayned (to the affrighted Beholder's seeming) the fashion of a fought Battaile. It began thus:—First for an onset went off one great Cannon as it were of thunder above like a warning peece to the rest that were to follow. Then a little while after was heard a second; and so by degrees a third untill the number of twenty was discharged in very good order though in very great terror. In some little distance of time after this was audibly heard the sound of a Drum beating a Retreate." Of course the stone fell to the ground—an aerolite undoubtedly.

Though we have no recent record of life having been taken by an aerolite, it is told by Petrus Martyr, an old ecclesiastic, that a monk was killed by an immense fall of stones at Crema, not far from Milan, in the early sixteenth century. Sheep, birds, and even fish were killed by this fall. In 1650, another



A METEORIC STONE WHICH FELL AT CRUMLIN, NEAR BELFAST.

Date of fall: September 13, 1902. Weight: 9 lb. 5¼ oz. Measurements: 7¼ in. long, 6¼ in. wide, 3¼ in. thick. Form: Irregular and distinctly fragmental, with nine or ten faces. The smooth face, cut since the fall, shows bright particles of metal and iron alloy mixed with the stony material.



METEORIC IRON FROM TOLUCA, MEXICO.
(*Polished surface etched with bromine.*)
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monk, near Milan, lost his life. During the explorations of South-Western Australia in 1870, a gum-tree was found lying across the path, which had been cut in two by an aerolite. The stone was near by.

Life itself, according to a daring speculation by Lord Kelvin, our great scientist, may have been brought to the world by an aerolite. As we do not know what life is, this is a theory hard to disprove.

Stones have fallen from the sky in all ages. What are they? Whence do they come? No new element unknown to the world's crust has been found in aerolites proper, hard agglomerations of rocky matter bearing metallic crystals, or in meteorites, composed almost entirely of iron, with a percentage of nickel, which take a bright, steely polish. About thirty terrestrial elements in all have been identified, but the composition of these stones differs from anything found on earth. They more closely resemble volcanic products thrown up from great depths in the earth than anything with which we are familiar.

In early days, scientific men easily satisfied themselves that the so-called "heaven stones" were mere ordinary stones on the earth's surface, which had been struck by lightning.

Then, as evidence of celestial falls accumulated, men looked further afield and turned to the moon. We were invited to regard the lunar volcanoes as continually showering down a rain of stones on earth. Unfortunately for this idea, there is not an atom of evidence that lunar volcanoes are active. Nor is it probable that they are fragments of a lost satellite of the earth. Sir Robert Ball has suggested that the aerolites may be fragments which long ages ago were shot out of immense volcanoes at that time existing on earth, and have ever since been wandering lonesomely round the sun.

We may have to go yet farther back than the age of this old world to find, at last, whence the aerolites sprang. A recent theory bids us regard them as the original matter out of which worlds are evolved, the material of which the solar system and the great sun itself were fashioned.

It is some matter for wonderment that these flying stones should ever reach the earth. Aerolites pass with enormous speed across the vault of the heavens, and when approaching from a contrary direction to our earth's path, would hardly survive the shock with our atmosphere; but where stone and earth are travelling in the same direction, the shock will be much minimised. As the aerolite falls, its speed is still further reduced as it passes through the ever-thickening atmospheric strata, until finally it descends to earth

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at a comparatively slow pace. Some stones fell at Hessle, in Sweden, on January 1st, 1869, on ice which was only a few inches thick, but their force was insufficient to break it, and they rebounded off without injury either to the ice or to themselves.

The sharp, angular form of the stones which reach the earth, and their peculiar

AEROLITE FALLING IN HUNGARY.

structure, seem to suggest that they are fragments torn from a larger mass. They bring us no evidence of living beings outside our own world, nor any form of animal or vegetable existence. Nor do they structurally present the conditions which would be expected in any world where air and water played a prominent part. One sure message they bring —of the intense cold of stellar space.

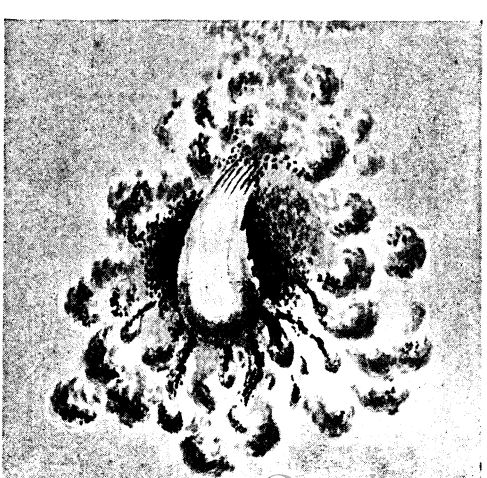
Though an aerolite's surface is fused by heat as it plunges through our atmosphere, the interior remains very cold. A large fragment which fell in moist earth at Dhurmsala, in India, in 1860, was found coated with ice. Among the constituents of a stone which fell at Krasnoslobodsh, in Siberia, September 4th, 1887, it is interesting to note, were minute diamond crystals.

To a fall from the sky the Eskimos of Greenland for generations owed the iron supply they used for knives and harpoon-heads. Sir John Ross, in 1818, discovered a tribe living in the inhospitable region of Cape York, and, what was more remarkable, found them to be in possession of bone implements with cutting edges of iron, a metal unknown in Greenland. The Eskimos told him that the metal was obtained from certain mysterious "iron mountains." Ross searched for the mountains, as did every subsequent expedition which passed, but for three-quarters of a century their secret was kept.

Lieutenant Peary, the Arctic explorer, was the first white man to set eyes on them, and found them to be, as he had expected, not "mountains," but immense masses of meteoritic iron. On a little island off the eastern coast, a friendly Eskimo guided him to where the three masses lay. The simple natives have a legend of their celestial origin, according to which they were originally an Eskimo woman, with her dog and tent, who had been hurled from heaven for some impropriety, and fell in that region.

The largest mass, the "tent," measuring as it does twelve feet by six feet, is the largest meteorite in the world, and weighs some ninety tons. It was brought home by Peary to America, where the three "iron mountains" have now been transplanted. All three bear marks of scorings where the Eskimos have beaten off the soft iron with stones, to use for their harpoons and knives, and they are evidently of common origin. No doubt is entertained of their meteoritic character, and they must be of great antiquity.

A story is told of an aerolite which fell on an American farm. It was claimed by the ground landlord, because the lease reserved to him all minerals and metals on the land. The tenant retained it on the score that it was not on the land when the lease was made. The landlord then demanded it as flying game. The tenant retorted that it had neither wings nor feathers to fly, and asserted his right to it as ground game. While the dispute raged, the Revenue officers seized the aerolite as an article which had been introduced into the country without paying duty. The writer does not vouch for the accuracy of this story.



EXPLOSION OF THE AEROLITE SHOWN ABOVE IN MID-AIR.

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RAIN, rain, go away, come again another day,
Little Billie wants to play!
What's the reason, do you s'pose, that it has to rain?
I've been flattening my nose up against the pane
For about an hour or so, begging for the rain to go.

In the attic it's no fun 'thout the other boys.
I get counting, one by one, every single noise;
And the rain-drops, when they strike, sound so kinder solemnlike.

I just wait in this one place, wishing it would pass,
Watching all the rain-drops race down across the glass.
See each big one, when it runs, gobble all the little ones

Rain, rain, go away—wish you'd come at night.
Guess you knew I'd plans to-day, and you came for spite.
Seems zif just the days it pours I most want to be outdoors!

BURGES JOHNSON.

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THE ARCHBISHOP'S EXPERIMENT.

By W. A. M. GOODE.*

"I ASSURE you," said the Evangelist, "it is the most stupendous scheme of practical Christianity that ever was suggested."

For several hours the three great Christian leaders of America had been threshing out the best methods by which to deal with the appalling spread of materialism. Their meeting was a sequel to a "good government" demonstration in New York, at which all had found themselves on the same platform. In dogma they were antitheses personified. They were now in the sitting-room of Archbishop Wales, the most unflinching of Roman Catholic prelates. The Bishop of Westchester, for years the representative exponent of the principles of the Episcopal Church, contentedly smoked his host's cigars. The last of the trio was the Evangelist, Dr. Martin, whose utterances had larger circulation than those of any preacher on earth. The air was thick with tobacco smoke and religion.

"The most stupendous scheme of Christianity," originated with Archbishop Wales. Half banteringly he said to the Evangelist—

"You 'use' the Press to a greater extent than any politician. You manage to secure for your views and sermons a better audience than is granted to the best speeches in Congress. You encourage the interviewer. I treat him with passive endurance and palpable fear, while the Bishop of Westchester has no hesitation in giving him the coldest of cold shoulders. And in this we are both at fault, for it is a truism that the Press is the most powerful of all levers in affecting national character and opinion. Yet you, with all your worldly wisdom in dealing with the Press—have you ever attempted to treat it internally?"

"Explain," said the Evangelist.

"I mean this. Have you ever tried so to influence a reporter or other newspaper man that he would be willing to print what you consider might do good, not for the sake of news alone, but for the sake of Christianity?"

The Evangelist's mouth was drawn to its lowest corners. He paused, recalling many incidents of a public career. Then he said somewhat sharply: "No, I have treated reporters and editors as means towards an end. I have taken no chances with my means. I have been satisfied with the result. As a general rule, I have had no time to consider the motive of my agent."

"In other words," rejoined the Archbishop, "you have treated what is notoriously a worldly institution in a worldly way. I suppose, if it were necessary, you stood your man a drink?" The Evangelist made a motion of dissent. "Even so," resumed the Archbishop, "you have made no effort to tackle the vital part of the problem. You have done more than any man to fill the papers with Christian literature; you put the Bishop and myself to shame in that respect; yet, practical as you are, you have only been operating, so to speak, on the fringes of practicability. How, for instance, does the politician go to work? He is not content with 'using' the Press. He owns it. He either buys a paper, or sees that it is controlled or represented by men who, for some reason or another, hold the same political opinions as he does himself. His main objective is the Press. He must have in it a certain proportion of support. It is vital to the success of his party. And why," continued the Archbishop, raising his voice, banging his fist on the table, and speaking with ever-increasing earnestness, "should we—or you—be content to do less than the politician? We send missionaries abroad to convert the heathen, and occupy ourselves at home by denouncing the immorality and materialism of our papers. Let us send missionaries to our Press. Let us concentrate our efforts upon what we all acknowledge to be the most powerful factor in daily life. Let us fill the newspaper offices with spiritually minded men, to whom we can appeal, as the politician appeals to his man in the same position. Let the newspaper be subservient to Christianity. At present, Christianity is subservient to the newspaper!"

The Bishop of Westchester advised an

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"Waiting for the millionaire to die."

individual experiment. The Evangelist suggested a name. And the result of their combined efforts was that Theodore Vanduzer, a graduate of Yale, presented himself to the managing editor of the *New York Chronicle*.

Now, the managing editor had dined several times with the Bishop of Westchester, and wished to dine again; so when he read the very urgent request to give the bearer a position on his staff, he treated it with more

than usual courtesy, and wrote to the city editor a non-committal note, asking him to do what he could. He was not in the habit of recommending any course of action to the city editor, because that gentleman happened to be a particular friend of the proprietor, and as much, if not more, of a power on the paper than the managing editor himself. However, the city editor, not having rheumatism that afternoon, was pleased with the appearance of Vanduzer—the Evangelist's nominee had a fresh and open countenance, and was well dressed—and after hearing that he had done "general work" on both the *Albany Courier* and *Schenectady Gazette*, took him on probation and gave him the vacant place of "Emergency Man."

It is no reflection upon Vanduzer's conscientiousness to divulge the fact that he accepted the position of Emergency Man without the faintest idea of its duties. Such a creature did not exist within the limits of his Albany and Schenectady experience. But, after all, he could write a fair story, and had tried his hand at "copy-reading"; moreover, the overwhelming righteousness of his motive in seeking an *entrée* to the *Chronicle* fully atoned for his failure to mention his incidental ignorance.

He came down at seven o'clock the next evening and asked to see the night city editor. Mr. Harris was sitting in his shirt and trousers before a desk piled high with "copy."

"Mr. Brussels, the city editor, told me to report to you for the emergency trick," said Vanduzer meekly.

No answer. The statement was repeated. From a long table near by, one or two heads were raised from the "hard copy" and "flimsy" that was being rapidly "boiled down" for the next morning's *Chronicle*. The boy—for this Emergency Man was little more—shifted uneasily from one leg to the other. Once more he addressed Mr. Harris, this time with result, for the figure, bent with years of burrowing, suddenly straightened itself out into the back of the chair and, with a quick glance at the new man, said—

"Then why the blazes don't you sit down at your desk?"

It was not very encouraging, but it was a beginning. Before the night was over, Vanduzer discovered that to be Emergency Man signified taking over the telephone long stories that never appeared in print, rushing out to a fire that only burned up seventy-five dollars' worth of property, to say nothing of re-editing several stories for which a maudlin copy-reader had been unable to devise headlines. And, after this, Vanduzer sat on the steps of a millionaire's house, waiting for the millionaire to die. The other Emergency Men, sitting on the same steps, told him that this was "a dead easy death-watch."

Dawn was breaking over Fifth Avenue when a hilarious voice addressed the recumbent figures on the great steps and inquired if one Vanduzer were there. The possessor of the name answered gladly, for it was a *Chronicle* man come to relieve him. Refusing a proffered drink, Vanduzer stumbled into an elevated train, retraced his way wearily in broad daylight, and fell asleep.

When he told the Bishop of Westchester late the same afternoon that he failed to see what Christian aspect he could inject into such work as had fallen to his lot the previous night, the Bishop patted him on the back and said sagely—

"Wait, my boy, wait! The opportunity will come. You are doing what we so much need—driving in the thin end of the practical wedge."

For all that, the Bishop was sorely puzzled. The idea of a newspaper "death-watch" was hard to reconcile with decency, let alone with Christianity. And, indeed, he did not see that a cultured Christian gentleman could utilise his qualities to much purpose by writing out a telephoned account of an arrest at Coney Island, or reporting a seventy-five-dollar fire merely for the benefit of the "waste-paper basket." He asked the Evangelist, and the Evangelist, with scarcely concealed pity for the Bishop's ignorance of the ways of the world, told him he was delighted with the missionary's initial success. "You see," observed the Evangelist, "to be of practical use, one has first to become practical. Vanduzer is having splendid opportunity."

The Bishop remembered this phrase and carefully wrote it to Vanduzer, forgetting to give credit.

The Archbishop, meanwhile, was absorbed in the preparation of a lengthy report to Rome dealing exhaustively with his attempt "to storm the citadel of materialism and unbelief—namely, the American Press." Many times a day he regretted that he had agreed to limit the experiment to one man. He had faith in Vanduzer, but there were *so* many opportunities, and *such* interesting examples might so quickly be provided to bear out his theory. However, the Archbishop had entered into a compact, and he

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"The butler announced Mr. Vanduzer."

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kept his energy within the bounds of theory and reports to Rome.

Vanduzer was neither a fool nor a fanatic. Through Yale and his brief newspaper career he had maintained a firm, simple faith in the goodness of God and a constant desire to improve himself and his fellow-men. He had had his Sunday-school class at his home in Albany, and he had even spoken at meetings, but he was a rattling full-back and by no means a bad pitcher. The selection of a man with so little of aggressive religion in his composition was only another instance of that excellent judgment of human nature which had made the Evangelist successful.

The evolution of the Emergency Man into a permanent, normal member of a daily newspaper staff is not a wildly exciting experience. In Vanduzer's case it was accomplished with unusual rapidity, for Ames, one of the Star Men, after taking a drink cure, and, to the astonishment of the entire staff, coming down to the office regularly for two weeks, went home one morning drunk, and died. Into his shoes stepped Vanduzer. He had shown no little adaptability in twisting "dead stories" into "live matter," and, moreover, had proved himself exceptionally willing and pleasant-natured. The contempt he at first felt for the men on the desk of the *Chronicle* and for the meretricious method of "playing up" sensational news, to the detriment of really important and instructive matter, he had kept carefully to himself. And, indeed, he had already learned that beneath the crudity of the copy-reader, who swore incontinently at his work, there was a certain strength which he himself lacked—a quickness of decision and perception that he envied and admired.

One morning he had gone home to his little rooms in Waverley Place, eyes blazing and clenched hands twitching with indignation because of a story by Bennett, one of the best of the *Chronicle's* reporters. From a servant girl Bennett had wormed out the inner history of a well-known Society couple, who, it had been rumoured, were soon to separate. In all its nauseating detail, with all its little sacred secrets of home life, quarrels, loss of trust, and eventual alienation of affection, Bennett had written this up to the honour and glory of the *Chronicle*. "Beat!" said Vanduzer to himself, as he strode home, "beat! Yes, great beat! Heaven preserve me from getting such a beat as that! The low hound!" And yet, that night, Vanduzer "nearly wept," as he expressively described it to the Archbishop, when he read the story, written by the same Bennett, of the eviction of an East-side woman, and the death on the way to the police-station of her only child. Getting up from the proof he had been reading, its manliness of pathos without suspicion of mawkishness, its fine touch of implied sympathy and remonstrance vibrating through every sentiment he possessed, Vanduzer went over to Bennett and, laying a hand on his arm, said: "What a great story! Wish I could do something like that!"

"Glad you liked it," said the old hand drily. And though his tone did not imply it, Bennett was touched by this spontaneous tribute from the youngster.

Perhaps it was due to this little bit of enthusiasm that when Vanduzer was promoted to "general work," he was usually assigned to assist Bennett on the big stories of the day. If it happened to be an interesting murder, Vanduzer would "cover" the police-station which reported the case, seeing the detectives, the sergeant on the desk at the time of the crime, the men who made the arrest, and any others from whom he might be able to glean the slightest information. All this he wrote down and handed to Bennett, who, meanwhile, had been to the scene of the tragedy, interviewing relatives, or, perhaps, inspecting, with eyes as keen and well-trained as those of the best detective, the body at the Morgue. At other times it was an important arrest of thieves; a ferry-boat collision on the East River; a suicide in Fifth Avenue; a destructive fire; a social scandal—in any of these or other of the greater happenings in the city which daily made the *Chronicle's* first page stagger under headlines, Vanduzer generally had some hand, though his contributions might be embedded in the main story written by Bennett. The sense of responsibility and his unusual preferment, whilst still "such a cub," made Vanduzer doubly careful and twice as keen. Almost imperceptibly he became imbued with the insatiable thirst after news, and began to feel that intoxicating, thrilling ecstasy which follows its attainment. He anxiously watched the other papers, to see if their men had secured anything more than himself on the assignment which had fallen to his lot. And if, as generally occurred, he discovered that some details, however small, had escaped their notice, he was supremely happy. The fierce excitement of close competition, the absorbing interest of the tragedies that mark the daily existence of a great city, were new to him: all new, and wonderfully enthral-

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ling. In Albany he had never felt or known this. "A born newspaper man," said Bennett to Brussels, when they discussed the boy. And the city editor thereupon raised Vanduzer's salary.

One evening, about four months after Vanduzer had joined the *Chronicle*, Archbishop Wales, the Bishop of Westchester, and Dr. Martin sat in the library at the Archbishop's house. They had come there by appointment, and Vanduzer himself was due in a few minutes.

"Well, what do you think?" asked the Bishop.

"Let us wait and hear what Vanduzer has to say," said the Evangelist. "Expressions of individual opinion may prejudice our united judgment upon matters of fact of which we are now ignorant."

"You may say what you like," interjected Archbishop Wales, "but I fear the scope of the experiment is too limited to permit of any deductions. If we had men on a dozen or twenty papers, we might be able to decide something. I must say that I have noticed no change in the *Chronicle*. In fact, I scarcely expected to find any just yet. If——"

The butler announced Mr. Vanduzer. The elder men welcomed him cordially. A few minutes later they were listening attentively to a report he was reading to them. In this, Vanduzer, by means of numerous clippings from the *Chronicle*, showed that, while still in a subordinate position, he had been able to inject a slight something of the "higher life—the chief aim of Christianity," into the news columns of the *Chronicle*. In his various assignments, Vanduzer had several times been able to discover and describe high and noble motives. Sometimes his descriptions of these had been eliminated before they got into print. Now and again he had been able to write a story founded purely on the good actions of some individual, and, thanks chiefly to the authors of his experiment, had been able to give several charitable and religious movements more prominence than they received in other papers. Yet, he admitted, his usefulness had been more negative than positive. He had been able, at times, to suppress the useless mention of the ignoble side of human nature, to prevent the publication in the *Chronicle* of the meaner motives actuating the people with whom he had been brought in contact, and avoid altogether the suggestive and indecent, even in cases where the facts undoubtedly proved the existence of the latter.

"It is nothing, this little I have done," he read. "I am nobody on the paper. What I write is passed upon by at least three other men before it reaches the public. By eliminating one word they may sometimes change my entire meaning. I am no better than the copy-reader, the night city editor, or the night editor. They are convinced by long experience that the public wants the sensational and the spicy, and they subordinate their own feelings to what they believe the public wants. They have done this for so long that they have become machines. I thoroughly believe that if the night editor became 'converted' and daily addressed Christian meetings, he would still preserve exactly the same attitude towards news. Now and again I have tried to draw, indirectly, a decent moral from a news occurrence. For this I have been severely called down, not because the moral was objected to, but because it was bad newspaper business to draw it."

The Prelates and the Evangelist listened in silence. When Vanduzer finished, the Evangelist said—

"You have not mentioned the internal work—the influence of personal example upon the men who make the paper. Have you been able to do anything in this respect?"

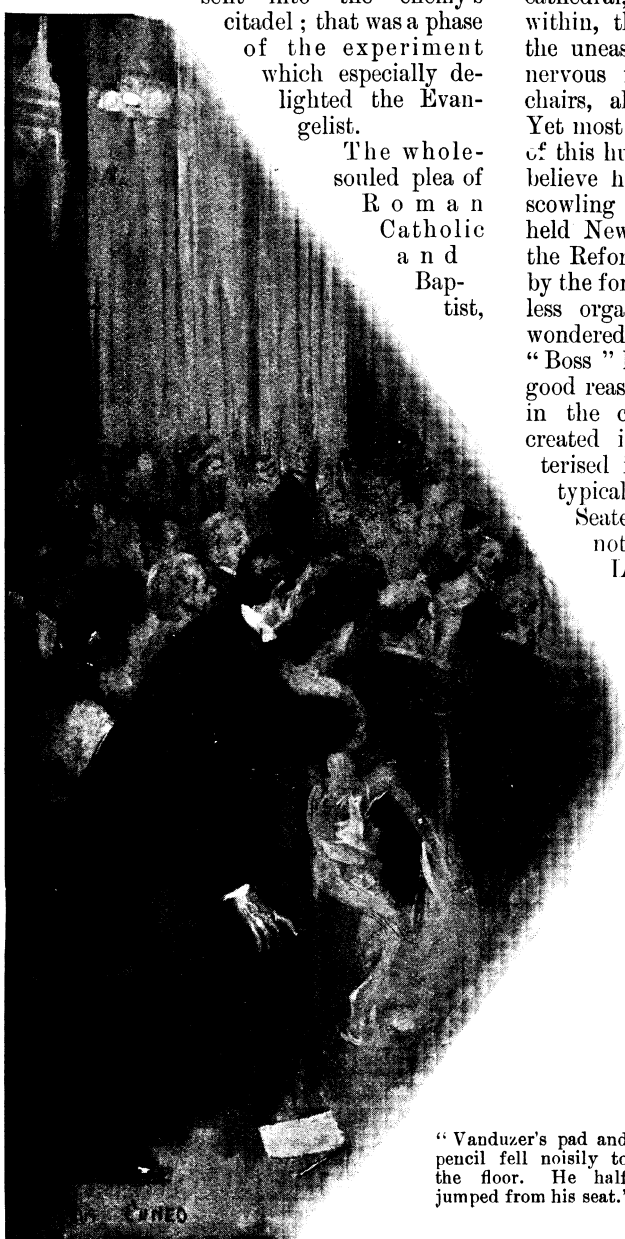
Vanduzer smiled.

"I'm afraid," he said, "that even if my example were all it ought to be, it would have little weight until I had proved by practical means that I was as good a man at the business as the other fellows. And that's a long way off, for a new man doesn't get much chance to distinguish himself. There's no royal road to favour on the *Chronicle*."

A conversation which brought no little enlightenment to the ecclesiastics, and some additional facts even to the worldly wise Evangelist, ended with the Bishop of Westchester giving Vanduzer a special ticket for an important service at the cathedral, to be held the following evening. The Bishop, as had been widely advertised, was then going to deliver a sermon upon "The Duty of Christian Men and Women in Social and Political Life." New York was on the verge of a municipal election, and the first pronouncement of this powerful cleric was eagerly awaited. It was a foregone conclusion that the trend of the sermon would be in favour of the Reformers; but exactly how far the Bishop of Westchester would go was unknown. Many issues and many

votes depended upon what the Bishop said—or, rather, left unsaid. As Vanduzer bade his patrons "Good night," both the Roman Catholic Archbishop and the Evangelist expressed the earnest hope that he would be able to obtain for the Episcopalian Bishop's sermon all possible publicity. They could scarcely ask or hope for favourable comment, since the *Chronicle* was opposed to the Reformers. Missionary Vanduzer had been sent into the enemy's citadel; that was a phase of the experiment which especially delighted the Evangelist.

The whole-souled plea of Roman Catholic and Baptist, urging fair treatment for Episcopalian preacher, was still ringing in Vanduzer's ears when he strode up the aisle of the cathedral to his reserved seat near the pulpit. Already the nave was packed, and many stood beneath the western windows waiting to scramble for the few unfilled seats which would be common property once the service began. The crowds that watched patiently on the steps outside the cathedral, the vastness of the congregation within, the murmur of expectant whisper, the uneasy shuffling of a thousand feet, the nervous rustle of women shifting in their chairs, all betokened intense anticipation. Yet most amazing of all was the composition of this huge body. Vanduzer could scarcely believe his eyes. On his right he saw the scowling features of the "Boss," he who held New York in a grip of iron—iron, so the Reformers said, that gained its strength by the forging of vice and crime into shameless organisation. Vanduzer involuntarily wondered if this were the first time the "Boss" had ever been to church. He had good reason. The appearance of the "Boss" in the cathedral that night had already created intense excitement. Some characterised it as brazen effrontery; others as typical of his undoubted fearlessness. Seated near the "Boss," Vanduzer saw notorious Ward-heelers, District Leaders, Police Captains—in fact, the whole galaxy that held power—by right of blackmail, said the Reformers. For a moment it occurred to Vanduzer that these flashily dressed politicians must be there to raise disturbance, but the thought was instantaneously dismissed: such expedient was too doubtful for the crafty to undertake. There they sat, in solemn discomfort, silent in the strangeness of their surroundings, making queer contrast to the whispering groups of lawyers, bankers, and professional men, who commented across their wives to fellow-Reformers upon the significance of the occasion. Back as far as the eye could see, stretched a motley crowd. Every element of New York's cosmopolitan population was represented. A few had come to worship.



"Vanduzer's pad and pencil fell noisily to the floor. He half jumped from his seat."

The short evensong was soon over, and the Bishop of West-

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chester slowly ascended the pulpit steps. A moment of intense silence followed. Thousands of faces fixed their gaze on the tall, familiar figure of the famous Bishop. In tones that rang from one end of the cathedral to the other, he read this text—

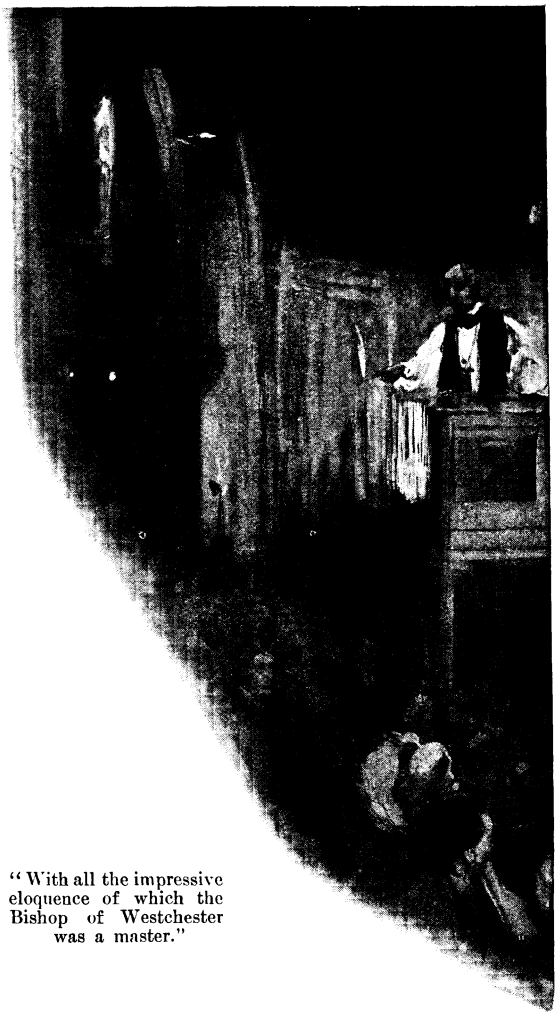
"Proverbs xxvi. 13.—There is a lion in the way : a lion is in the streets."

The vast congregation could scarcely believe its ears. The Lion was the emblem of the "Boss's" party. The Bishop was going to attack openly, from the cathedral pulpit, the political organisation now in power. The standing crowds in the aisle surged nearer the preacher. Men and women stood up in the hope of catching a glimpse of the "Boss." Vanduzer, with pad in front of him, glanced up in hurried apprehension of a scene. But the "Boss" sat still, and his face bore only the set scowl that all New York knew so well.

With the opening sentences of the sermon came an anti-climax to the sensation of the text. Instead of making immediate reference to any political issue, the Bishop, in calm, dispassionate language, traced the duty of a Christian towards the daily issues with which citizenship and social duty brought him face to face. They must all have differing views, and conscience alone could be the dividing line of justification. Such a sermon, thought Vanduzer, as he hurriedly wrote on the pad on his knee, was scarcely equal to the occasion. Yet the incisiveness of the language, the purity of expression and breadth of view, appealed to him. He scarcely had time to look up, but he instinctively felt that the mind, if not the heart, of the congregation was coming under the spell of the gentle logic and generous religion of the preacher. Still, Vanduzer reflected with regret, the *Chronicle* could print little of this : it was too much of an ordinary sermon. Nevertheless, Vanduzer wrote on with a pleased feeling of sympathy with the Bishop's sentiments. They were all very familiar to him—so much so that he found his shorthand notes almost running ahead of the speaker, concluding sentences before the Bishop had completed them.

In the pleasure of this newly found dexterity in reporting, Vanduzer was quite oblivious of the increasing surprise around him at the Bishop's continued omission to revert to what his hearers universally believed to be the motive of the text. The Bishop declaimed against the spirit of materialism and vice in municipal politics and social life, which all must recognise, regardless of party creed, and vaguely intimated that this was the "Lion in the way and in the streets." The congregation, swayed by his eloquence, listened intently, yet with silent hope that the identification of the Lion might be made more dramatically specific.

Suddenly Vanduzer's pad and pencil fell noisily to the floor. He half jumped from his seat, then hurriedly bent down, picked up his pencil, and recommenced his notes. But his hands moved only mechanically, for it flashed across Vanduzer's horrified mind that he had heard this identical sermon before—but from other lips. No—Vanduzer corrected himself—not heard, but read it !



"With all the impressive eloquence of which the Bishop of Westchester was a master."

Now he understood why the reporting had been so easy, and why the Bishop's phrases sounded so familiar. The perspiration started from Vanduzer's forehead.

Word for word, slowly, but surely, with all the impressive eloquence of which the Bishop of Westchester was a master, there came from the pulpit in the cathedral the sermon written fifty years ago upon a similar topic by an almost unknown divine. Transmogrified as it was by gesture and intonation which, as the sermon reached its close, held the congregation rapt, Vanduzer could not deceive himself, try as he would, into mistaking the powerful diction of simple John Cohier. Only by the merest chance—and he inwardly cursed that chance—did Vanduzer know of the existence of Cohier or of the sermon. Burrowing some years ago in an old bookstore, Vanduzer had come across a dirty pamphlet. The title, "The Christian's Duty towards the World," attracted him. Ever since then he had been a firm admirer of "one-sermon" Cohier, as he jokingly called him.

Every fresh sentence that came from the pulpit convicted the Bishop of Westchester of more and more glaring plagiarism. Feverishly Vanduzer waited for the end. "He must——" Vanduzer muttered to himself, "he *must* give credit. It's downright theft. The Bishop couldn't—no—it isn't only ideas"—Vanduzer's pencil easily kept pace with the preacher—"it's sentence for sentence—not a word changed—old Cohier's masterpiece!"

But the end came, and there was no word—no mention of Cohier. As if in a dream, Vanduzer heard the people whispering around him: "What a great sermon!" "Broad without being too generous." "He hit the 'Boss' hard, yet he didn't mention him except in the text." "Politic without being political." "No other man in America could have preached such a sermon!"

In a maze of conflicting emotions, Vanduzer ran rather than walked to his rooms, and made one dash for the bookcase. It was no delusion, no strange trick of memory: there, in the dirty old pamphlet, printed half a century ago, was the great sermon which all new York and half America had expectantly awaited from the Bishop of Westchester: stolen—lock, stock, and barrel—from John Cohier. It was the most amazing case of cold-blooded plagiarism on record. What an awful *exposé* of the Bishop and the frailty of the highest! What a story——!

Then, and only then, it flashed across Vanduzer's mind that his appearance at the office of the *Chronicle* must be impatiently waited, for it was growing late. In an instant the thirst for news reasserted itself. The enthusiasm which had caused Mr. Bennett to remark "that he was a born newspaper man," the exultation which alone comes from being the sole possessor of information that will set the world by the ears, swept over Vanduzer with an irresistible joy far stronger than the physical drunkenness he had never experienced. Friends, motives, all were forgotten in the realisation that he would win fame with a great story. He did not even bother to stop to argue with himself that suppression of the Bishop's plagiarism would be disloyal to the newspaper that paid him.

Half an hour later, Vanduzer sat in the office of the *Chronicle* writing for dear life to catch the country edition. Behind him stood the night city, and beside him was the managing editor. Only in cases of great emergency did those two potentates deign to leave their desks. Now, "all of a tremble," as one of the copy-boys waiting to take Vanduzer's manuscript sheet by sheet to the composing-room described them, they urged the young reporter to rapid transcription of his shorthand notes. *Sotto voce* they carried on conversation.

"It will kill the Reformers," said the managing editor.

"It will double our circulation," rejoined the night city, as he shoved a sheet of Vanduzer's copy into the boy's hand and accelerated his flight with a push.

The rattle of the linotypes, working furiously, came from the composing-room like inspiring music to Vanduzer. All the great human and other machinery of the paper waited on his written words.

"It's the best beat we've had for years," said the night editor, joining the other magnates, who hung, as if the universe were at stake, on Vanduzer's scribbled pages.

"I've doubled his salary," whispered the managing editor.

The hands of the clock approached midnight. Vanduzer wrote: "The Benediction was then given," and pushed his last sheet over to the night city. "Want any more descriptive?" he asked, with palpable effort to appear unconcerned.

"No, my boy; no, thanks. That's enough. You've done splendid. The deadly parallel will do the rest."

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Without quite knowing what the "deadly

"They urged the young reporter to rapid transcription of his shorthand notes."

parallel" might mean, Vanduzer drank in the praise. Then Bennett and all the older hands crowded around and congratulated him.

Many a night Vanduzer had dreamed of such a triumph. Now that it had really come, he felt, somehow, too tired and too worn out to appreciate it. Under the strain of getting and writing his beat, excitement had kept him going; it was all over now,

and Vanduzer felt as if he were coming out of a trance.

"Here's a page proof," said the night city, coming from the composing-room. "Perhaps you'd like to see how it looks in type." He handed Vanduzer a proof of the *Chronicle's* first page, as it was to appear that morning.

Across the whole front of the page Vanduzer saw in huge letters--

THE BISHOP OF WESTCHESTER A THIEF.

CHAMPION OF REFORMERS ATTACKS THE LION IN SERMON WHICH HE STOLE BODILY FROM REV. JOHN COHIER.

Sacrilege in Cathedral by Barefaced Plagiarist.

METHODS OF REFORM PARTY SENSATIONALLY EXPOSED BY THE *CHRONICLE*, WHICH, IN THE INTERESTS OF GOOD GOVERNMENT, WILL NOT ALLOW THE PEOPLE OF NEW YORK TO BE IMPOSED UPON BY THE RANK DISHONESTY AND HYPOCRISY OF BISHOPS AND OTHER REFORMERS.

THE DEADLY PARALLEL.

Sermon by John Cohier, 1863.	Sermon by Bishop of Westchester, 1913.

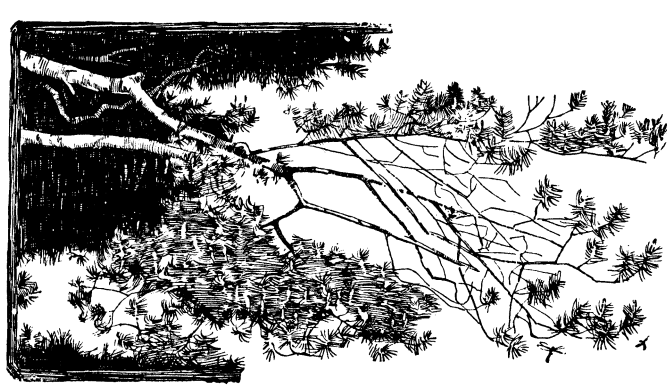
Then Vanduzer, staring at the blazing type, realised what he had done. The demon of work and the lust of news were departed. In their place reigned a clear vision of trust and noble cause betrayed. He had even bitten the hand that fed him.

With a cry of despair Vanduzer dashed toward the composing-room. He brandished the staring proof.

"Give it me back!" he shouted. "You cannot—you must not print that! Give it me back!"

The loud rumble of the presses, as they started on the night's work, shook the building and drowned the cry.

Vanduzer, terror-stricken, knew that the first copies of the *Chronicle* were already on the streets.



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CONCERNING COMMON SENSE

BY A BOY WHO HAS NONE

I HAVE heard it said that geniuses never have any common sense, so I suppose I must be a genius. If my parents could be induced to take this view of the case, it might console them for my deficiencies, but they seldom see things as I do. When people are as old as a chap's parents can't help being, it isn't fair to expect too much from them. It seems to me that I have pointed this out in a previous article, but, knowing what I know of the exactingness of schoolboys in their natural state, I feel that it cannot be pointed out too often. However, I am striving to overcome my tendency to make digressions, so let me drop parents abruptly. As a rule, they have little or nothing to do with the subject of this article.

Our headmaster places a disproportionate value on common sense, and is rather inclined to hold the eccentricities of genius up to ridicule. This is a mistake; but one would like to overlook it, as there are many things which might be said in his praise by a kindly disposed person.

It is because of the disproportionate value aforementioned that he always gives us what he calls a "Common Sense Paper" in the course of the English exams.—a beastly unfair thing to do, because heaps of the questions are about things we have never been taught. His argument is that if we had observation and common sense, we could answer them; but I can't see the justice of that when exam. marks are involved.

So that you may judge for yourself the

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"Tell anything you know about Airships?
"A very clever man called Sir Francis Bacon invented one and went up in it, and they made jokes about pigs having wings."

kind of stuff this precious paper is, I will write out some of the questions, together with the answers given by one of the boys who is really a very original thinker. He is a modest boy, and it does not seem to me that it is necessary to mention his name.

Question.—To what do these terms refer: Solar System; Feudal System; Block System; Metric System; Short Service System?

Answer.—Solar System is a way of teaching singing. Feudal System is a thing that happened in a king's reign. Block System is an American manner of building towns so that you can't lose your way in them. Metric System is writing poetry instead of prose. Short Service System is when the clergyman omits the Litany.

Question.—If you were weighed in a coal-mine, and weighed again at the top of a mountain, would there be any difference in your weight? If so, why?

Answer.—You would be heavier in the mine because of the coal-dust settling on your clothes and skin. You would be lighter on top of the mountain because the wind up there would blow the dust away.

Question.—Complete the proverbs: "Give a dog——"; "It's a long lane——"; "Love me——"; "Let well——"; "Two heads ——"

Answer.—"Give a dog a bone." "It's a long lane that leads to the tuckshop." "Love me while I wait." "Let well-behaved boys alone." "Two heads can be knocked together."

Question.—What are the Cingalese, the Grampians, the Dardanelles, the Polynesians, the Slavs, the Slums, the Aborigines, the Tropics, the Attics, the Senses?

Answer.—The Cingalese are people who never marry. The Grampians are creatures that live in the sea, and puff and snort when they come to the surface. The Dardanelles are mountains. The Polynesians are people who live in Poland. The Slavs are lakes. The Slums are drains used for the dwellings of extremely poor people. The Aborigines are the opposite sides of the earth. The Tropics are the things that are talked about at any time. The Attics are either Greeks or cellars at the top of a house. The Senses is a counting of the population.

Question.—Describe any primitive method of obtaining fire?

Answer.—Stealing coal and matches.

Question.—What is meant by the following words: Cantankerous, Obvious, Jury, Pew-

"Define Gravity.
"There are two kinds of gravity. One is a certain thing that keeps people from going up into the sky. The other keeps them from laughing at jokes."

ter, Fossil, Highlander, Pier, Warehouse, Diary?

Answer.—Cantankerous means having a disease. Obvious means being quite sure of something. Jury is that part of a court which is opposed to the judge. Pewter is a sort of sticky stuff with which bricks are put together. Fossil is a thing which is dug up which is a curiosity. Highlander is a soldier that wears no trousers. Pier is a man who sits in Parliament and rejects things. Warehouse is a place where people who have no money go to sleep. Diary is a place where you make butter and cheese.

Question.—Tell anything you know about Airships?

Answer.—A very clever man called Sir Francis Bacon invented one and went up in it, and they made jokes in the papers about pigs having wings.

Question.—What is Chemical Action?

Answer.—A thing like sherbet that fizzes.

Question.—Define Gravity.

Answer.—There are two kinds of gravity. One is a certain thing that keeps people from going up into the sky. The other keeps them from laughing at jokes.

Question.—What is Faith?

Answer.—Faith is that quality which

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enables you to believe what you know to be untrue.

Question.—Which do you think the most useful of your senses? And why?

Answer.—Common sense, because it makes you know a lot without being told.

I have my own private opinion of the above answers to the above questions; but, as it differs from the headmaster's opinion, it may perhaps be wiser to suppress it. He—being what he is, which I need not put more plainly—marked it 1, the maximum being 100. Perhaps he meant it for a joke, intending it to be understood that the paper was one in a hundred. If he did, his joke cost that boy (who shall be nameless) the English prize—an injury which may be forgiven in time, but can never be forgotten.

When I am grown up, if I find myself in a position to encourage anything, I mean to encourage originality, instead of sitting upon it and squashing it, as I have seen it sat upon and squashed in my own youth; which I consider the right way to profit by sad experience.

And, to conclude, I should jolly well like to know why such a beastly fuss should be made about Common Sense if that last answer was wrong?

If the person I have in my mind sees this article, he may send me an anonymous explanation if he likes, and I'll know who it comes from; but it shall be treated as confidential, which—all things considered—is rather more than the person deserves.

PHYLLIS.

FAR from the city's toil
And ceaseless strife,
Child of the bounteous soil,
You live your life.
Turquoise depths in your eyes,
Borrowed from country skies'
Fathomless blue;
Roses abloom in your cheek,
At the first word I speak,
Phyllis, to you.

Daughter of earth and sky,
Child of the moors,
Ere you, too, fade and die,
What will be yours?
In the dim years to be,
What has blind Destiny,
Joy or Misery,
Phyllis, for you?

Clear as the cloudless sky,
May your sweet life pass by,
Honest and true.
Phyllis, with turquoise eyes
Bright as the summer skies'
Fathomless blue.

E. ESMONDE.

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THE LION AND THE UNICORN.

By EDGAR TURNER and REGINALD HODDER.

HAT to call her? that's the question," said Branson, the director of the A—— Zoological Gardens, as he walked round his new sixteen horse-power motor-car at the gate, admiring her build and indicating her strong points here and there.

"Call her Rattlesnake, or Eagle, or Bison," I suggested. "Regard her as another strange creature added to your collection."

"None of those names exactly describes sixteen horse-power," he objected. "Indeed, I walked through the Gardens this morning, from the ostriches to the tortoises, without finding just the thing wanted."

Dr. Branson's house, where I was spending a short holiday, was on the outskirts of the Gardens, facing the encircling road, and from behind the heavy banks of foliage at the back we could hear the growling chorus of the denizens of the Zoo. A lion roared majestically; jackals bayed at the full moon rising above the tree-tops; and the hyænas laughed again. With the sound of the primæval forest in our ears, the motor throbbing with pent energy seemed strangely unreal.

"No, I'm hanged if I know what to call her," said Branson after a brief, reflective silence. "Here, let's take a spin round the circle at high speed. There's no one about, and fifty miles an hour might inspire us with a name."

"Sorry. Afraid I can't come," I replied. "I want to catch the late mail, and have only a quarter of an hour to do it in."

"All right," he said, getting in, "see you later." And the car started round the circle in search of a name.

I ran up to the house and in a few minutes finished my letter. Then, wheeling out my bicycle, I mounted and set off for the post-office. As I passed along the outer wall of the Gardens, I heard a commotion among the ducks, accompanied by loud shouts. What was the matter? Possibly, I thought, some keepers chasing a predatory dog that had no right in the Zoo. And as the shouting soon ceased, I assumed that they had successfully scared the marauder away from the duckponds.

As I drew near a large acacia shadowing the path outside the wall, I concluded that my guess was correct, for I saw a huge dog leap over on to the roadside and stand in the shadow watching my approach. He appeared to be one of those massive Great Dane brutes, but I could not see him very distinctly.

When I drew level with the acacia, I flicked my fingers and said gaily: "Hello, boy! After the ducks, eh?" For a moment I thought he liked my pleasant greeting. But only for a moment. Then my heart stood still and my hair rose on my head; for a mighty roar came from the animal's throat, and with a tremendous bound he launched himself in the air at me.

Involuntarily I made a sudden spurt to escape the spring, and glancing over my shoulder, saw the huge beast descending. I groaned as I heard the heavy fall of his feet a little way behind my back wheel. That momentary glance showed me that it was a savage lion, and not a dog, that was at my heels.

While he pulled himself together after his spring, I put on speed and gained a few yards. But he followed swiftly. And presently there was another roar, and I knew he was in the air a second time. Thinking that in a second his sharp claws would be in my shoulders, I nearly rolled off the bicycle with terror. Again, however, he fell short, and again I sprinted for dear life.

He followed at a gallop and then sprang once more. The moments while he was in the air seemed hours, and when his four paws thudded on the road again, I felt to my horror that he had alighted a little nearer to me than before. I bent over the handlebars and strove to increase my speed, but my legs were weak and trembling, and I could not. I heard his angry growls and quick breath as he galloped again, and I expected presently to hear his roar before

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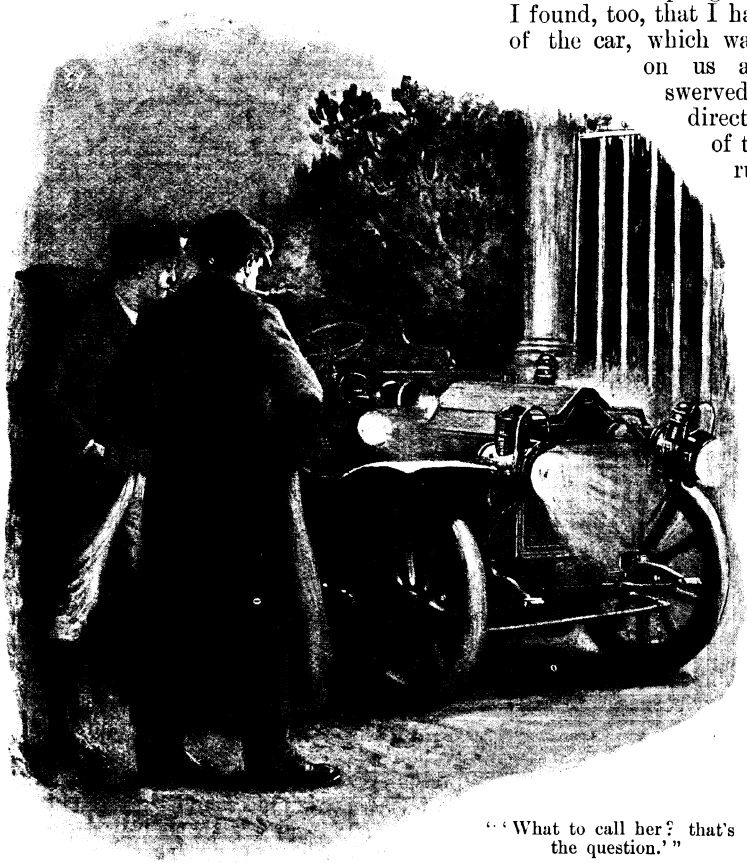
his next spring. And at that roar I felt I should collapse. It is an awful sound when it is hard on your heels.

Again he sprang—this time with a short snarl. Cold thrills shot down my back as I spurted forward. The snap of his jaws sounded not two yards off my back wheel, and a growl of baffled rage spoke of his disappointment.

But I was now beginning to collect my wits, and my legs were getting firm again.



"'What to call her? that's the question.'"

I resolved that at the next spring I would swerve from the centre of the road to the right-hand side and so possibly evade him. It came. I felt him rushing through the air behind me, and swerved sharply. No sooner had I done so than he alighted almost abreast of me on the track I had just left. His bark and snarl were terrible to hear.

Keeping on the extreme right-hand side of the road, I increased my pace, the lion following at a gallop less than half-a-dozen yards behind. Suddenly I saw the lights of a motor-car rounding the curve ahead of me. This, I thought, would frighten him; but no; he was mad and determined to have me. The car was approaching very rapidly. Like lightning, I made up my mind to cut across its path, hoping in this way to scare or baffle my pursuer.

Just as I swerved to do this, there came another roar from behind. Apparently the lion had guessed my plan, and this time I felt that his spring was right on my track. I found, too, that I had misjudged the pace of the car, which was now tearing down on us at racing speed. I swerved further and headed direct for the opposite side of the road to avoid being run down. The thing occupied not three seconds. The roar and the spring of the lion, the "toot-toot" of the motor a dozen yards away, and my swerving to escape, were almost simultaneous. I felt the wind of the rushing car as it grazed my hind wheel. There was a shout, a crushing thud, and a jolt on the part of the car; while I, unable to stop my career, dashed full tilt into the thick hedge at the roadside.

The yielding foliage of the *micro carpa*, of which the hedge was composed, saved me from broken bones; but it was some time before I could pull myself together. When at last I did so and crawled out, I saw Branson and two of the Zoological Gardens keepers, both breathless as if they had been running, gathered round an object in the middle of the road. It was the lion, dead.

"How did it happen?" I asked, feeling very much saved.

"Why," said Branson, "all I know is that at the moment you cut across my track, I saw the brute, with his eyes gleaming in the light, descending from his spring. He

touched ground within a few inches of your wheel, and at that very moment we caught him fair on the head. It nearly upset us. Heavens! old man, it was a narrow escape all round."

"It was the narrowest escape I ever had," I exclaimed; and I narrated the pursuit briefly.

"The pity of it is," he said dejectedly, "it's the finest lion in the Gardens, and I've killed him with my motor-car. His skull is completely smashed."

He was indeed a magnificent beast. As he lay there dead on the road in the moonlight, I could not help admiring him, though he had almost been the death of me.

"Yes, I've killed him with my motor-car," repeated Branson. "But," he added, turning to the keepers, "if it hadn't been for your carelessness, he would have been alive in his cage now. How the deuce did he get loose?"

One of the keepers started to explain in a lame fashion.

"Yes, yes," broke in Branson, cutting him short. "You shall give me the rest of the details later. Now see about taking the animal away. And remember that this is purely a departmental matter. No chattering to newspaper people or anything of that sort. And be careful over the skin — it must go to this gentleman who nearly lost his life through your carelessness."

Leaving them to their task, we got into the motor-car and drove off.

"Well, there's one thing," remarked Branson presently. "We've lost a first-class lion, but we've found a good name for the car."

"What is it?" I asked.

"The Unicorn," he replied, with a smile. "The famous fight between the lion and the unicorn for the crown, was, I believe, won by the lion. But on this occasion the other animal has come out on top. Yes, the name of the car is the Unicorn."

And a little later, when Branson opened a bottle of rare old wine in celebration of my escape, we formally toasted it under that name.

"His bark and snarl were terrible to hear."

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THE MEN IN BUCKRAM.

By H. C. BAILEY.

FULKE, the little lay brother, he that six hundred years ago wrote in very strange Latin a book of noble histories (that is Fulke's own phrase), has given me the bones and sinew of this tale. I think from a certain archness in Fulke's style—and Fulke's Latin, when it strives to be arch, is most wonderful reading—that the little man thought it a tale of humour. Myself, I hold it for a most moral relation and a warning to sundry my friends.

For the cause of all was nothing but the King's hurry. You cannot think it right that a King should ever be in a hurry. Now, hear what came of that deplorable moment, perpend and hereafter be leisurely.

In the spring of the year of grace 1282, Llywelyn ab Gruffydd broke out of Anglesey and ravaged the four lantreds of Perveddwlad and the marches as far as the very battlements of Chester. But that, of course, we all know. So it happened that, in the summer of 1282, King Edward I. moved westward with a great host to speak with Llywelyn. Now, the gout had laid the Chancellor, Robert Burnell, by the heels, and in his place was only Anthony Bek, the Bishop of Durham. On a day in June, at Market Drayton, Anthony Bek consulted the King on an infinity of small matters. Thus:

"Arises also," says Anthony Bek, sniffing, "the matter of the Lady Elinor of——" The King was in a hurry and—

"Now, why must the Lady Elinor arise?" he snapped.

"—of Tarporley, of Chertsey, of Fawkham, of Meopham and de Lorgnac," says Anthony Bek, who always finished a sentence.

"Does she need more than that?"

"Surely, sir, no," says the Bishop very seriously. "But she being by the decease of her father, Sir Roger of Tarporley, of Chertsey, of——"

"Of heaven, we trust!" cried the King in haste. The Bishop crossed himself.

"This lady, then, sir, the Lady Elinor of——"

"All the earth. My lord bishop, be short!"

"I try, sir, zealously. This Lady Elinor of—of these manors, sir—hath come into wardship of the Crown——"

"Humph. Marry her. Is that all?" Sir Stephen, captain of the King's House, strode in, gleaming in his mail, and to him the King turned eagerly to talk of the host, and heard not the Bishop's—

"She would then need a husband, sir." A moment the King pondered on Sir Stephen's words. Then—

"I keep you but the time to arm me," he cried, and was going.

"But, sir, arises need of a husband," said the Bishop anxiously, and Sir Stephen gaped, knowing not why a bishop needed one.

"Roger de Belesme," snapped the King in a hurry, and went out. It was the first name that rose to his lips.

"O Beelzebub!" muttered Sir Stephen, who had met Roger.

"Sir?" said the Bishop, who had not heard, nor yet knew Roger.

"A *nom de guerre*, my lord," said Sir Stephen.

The Bishop had no knowledge of the lady nor the spouse. To him they were names on a piece of parchment. Wherefore he indited, with flourishes of pen and style, a letter to the Lady Elinor that called her to

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the Court and advised her of her happy fate. Then the Bishop went to Sir Bertram, the lieutenant of Sir Stephen, and begged him go, take the letter, and bring the lady back. So all things went fairly.

Now see Sir Bertram and his men riding over the mead in the golden dawn, mark the flash and flicker of light on lance-point and mail, hear the melody of steel. Riding two and two, a score of them, they came to the old moss-green house beyond Tarporley. Maids and men running up swept the ground in bows and curtsies. Then it was told Sir Bertram that the Lady Elinor was in the apple-orchard. So Sir Bertram's great charger, Bedivere, must needs pick his feet daintily down the narrow path and through the narrow gap in the high yew hedge, and the huge pair of them, man and horse, backed by the golden sun of a morning in June, came to the orchard and the Dew Pond and a vision. There, standing in the dark dappled water, was an apple-green goddess. Was the hair of her brown, or rich gold? Now this, now that, Sir Bertram saw it. Was the round neck white, or cream as a peach? Or either, or both, it was adorable. For sure she was tall and—the stupid horse must needs toss his head and make her turn to the rattling bridle ere Sir Bertram had looked an instant long. The lady saw a man that in every way was very large. I cannot find out what she thought.

Sir Bertram bowed: "Pardon, lady, and again pardon. I am Bertram, of the King's House, and I bear a letter from the King."

She came through the rippling water to the bank, dropping her gown inch by inch. I do not think that she blushed. Over the soft grass she came, while her little white feet stole in and out under her gown. Down sprang Bertram and knelt to give her the letter. When he rose, she looked into his eyes. She discovered that his were black; he discovered that hers were beautiful.

"From the King, sir? And why?"

"At least, from the Bishop of Durham, in the King's name. It is feared that Tarporley may be in danger of the war, and I am sent to escort you to Whitchurch"; so Bertram telling all he knew. The lady gave him a curtsy.

"In truth I am honoured," she murmured; and he would have given much to know whether she laughed at him or no. Then she broke the seal and began to read that florid letter. Bertram had a chance to watch her face, and he saw it suddenly crimson as a rose. She crumpled the parchment in her hand; her eyes flashed; her bosom rose stormily.

"And is thy name Roger?" she cried sharply.

"I am called Bertram," says he, amazed—and still amazed to hear a little angry laugh and a muttered: "I am spared something, then." She took a step nearer Bertram. "I despise your King!" she cried. Bertram drew himself up.

"You speak of what you do not know, lady." She was aware that she had forgotten her dignity and that he saw it. That made her angry.

"Haply you know a certain Roger de Belesme, Sir Bertram?" Bertram bowed. "And do you honour him?" Bertram laughed.

"Honour? Why, honour! Truth to tell, I had not thought of it with Roger de Belesme."

"I thank you, sir. I am to marry him," says the lady, and with that swept queenly away.

So Bedivere the charger was left to see his master turn to a lichened apple tree and pick at the grey bark with his fingers. Bedivere the charger snorted. Like mere men and women, Bedivere scorned what he did not understand. And still Bertram picked at the bark. For if you know that you are completely a fool, you may as well pick apple bark as aught else.

It was not till the next day that he saw the Lady Elinor again. Then, riding last of his troop, he marked the grace of her as she swayed to her palfrey's paces. His own steed Bedivere felt him grow mightily heavy, as a man does who is dead with weariness and cannot yield to his horse. Now the Lady Elinor (who never once looked at Sir Bertram) saw him a clumsy lump in the saddle and told herself that the boor could not even ride. Justice forgive her! Shall I warn you again of being in a hurry?

So, happily, they came to Whitchurch, and there before the door of the royal pavilion was the Bishop of Durham, there also Sir Roger de Belesme, very splendid in cloth of silver. Plump (says Fulke) he was, and had curling brown hair to his shoulders. Smiling sweetly, he came to help the Lady Elinor to the ground, but she had sprung lightly down ere he reached her. Then Sir Roger, amorous of a lady so well endowed, would have taken her in his arms to kiss her.

She held out her hand to him, so Sir Roger, failing of better, kissed that. She swept him a low curtsy.

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"'Tis you are Sir Roger de Belesme, sir?" she said; and Sir Roger was wreathed in smiles and bowed. Then she turned to Sir Bertram, a glum giant on Bedivere. "Sure, sir, I shall never forget your part," said she. Whereat Bertram bowed stiffly like a jointed doll and watched her pass in on Sir Roger's arm.

The next day and the next Sir Roger made love ardently, as a man does to a lady of many manors. What the lady thought of it or of him I profess I cannot tell. Sir Bertram, I know, thought very meanly of both, and, to tell truth, Sir Roger was inches too plump to be romantic. Bertram was not joyous, and that was noted by his friend and sworn brother, young Sir Harry of Silvermere, who, dining with him at the "Wheatsheaf," complained that Bertram did not laugh at his jokes.

"And these same jests have made men laugh these five years past," says Harry. Bertram grunted. "Even my wife laughs at them sometimes." Bertram grunted again. "And if a man can make his wife laugh, sure he can give a laugh to any." Bertram grunted a third time. "But, faith! you are become pig!" cried Harry. Bertram looked at him. "O most noble and chivalric knight, since you saw that lady at Tarporley, you are become a pig." Bertram grew red as the Bordeaux wine. "Ho, ho!" says Harry. "Pigs blush, then!"

"Oh, Harry, stop your tongue!" groaned Bertram.

Sir Harry put down his wine-cup. Sir Harry's smile changed, and—

"I am often a fool," says he. "I did not know . . ." And the two looked at each other awhile. "And what shall we do?" says Sir Harry lightly. For a little Bertram sat, head on hand, then looked up and laughed not gaily.

"Why, thank God for the war," says he. "And fight! Fight!"

"And—forget?" says Harry very quietly, watching him. Bertram nodded. Harry stretched out his hand to Bertram's. "My dear lad," said he.

Now, Sir Harry in the afternoon saw Sir Roger and the Lady Elinor ride in together from hawking, and I fear that he swore. He saw Sir Roger hand the lady from her saddle, and blamed (most unjustly) the way it was done. For Sir Roger was very perfect in the little arts. In went the lady, and Harry, grudging, owned to himself that she walked as a goddess. Sir Roger was left plump and magnificent. Just then it befell that a forester came leading two boarhounds, and one of them slipped the leash and rushed barking round. Sir Roger was tapping his spur noisily with his whip. The sound, belike, displeased Master Boarhound. I know not. At least, white-fanged and roaring, he rushed at Sir Roger. Out came that good knight's dagger, and—and a gripe fell on his dagger hand: a great brown fist knocked the dog's jaws clashing together. He turned a somersault in the air, and arose, chastened, a wiser dog: departed without noise.

"And what a pox wouldst do with the dagger?" growled Sir Stephen—he that owned the brown fist.

"Sir Stephen!" cried Sir Roger haughtily.

"Bah! Steel to a hound? To a woman next!" So Sir Stephen, and turned his broad back. Sir Roger muttered something anent boors and departed. "Bah! There goes a coward!" said Sir Stephen.

"May Heaven," says Harry devoutly, "be praised!" and went off in a hurry.

That night a minstrel sang a Provençal lay while Sir Roger leant plumply amorous over the Lady Elinor's chair; to whom came Sir Harry, and was greeted with a scowl from the knight and a smile from the lady. Even she drew her skirts from the chair at her side that Sir Harry might sit with her. And "The King hath not come, then, Sir Harry?" says the lady.

Harry opened his eyes wider.

"Not yet. On the morrow, I think."

"I am glad. I would speak to him."

And all to himself and silently: "Oho, oho!" said Sir Harry. But aloud—

"Then, doubtless, we move. And, faith! we pine for war, save such"—and he bowed at Sir Roger—"as be more than happy here."

"The Welshmen will not bide our coming. They be," quoth Sir Roger valiantly, "all runagate cowards."

"H'm. Well, at least we lie in a pleasant place. Noble hawking there is on the westward hills." In truth, those hills breed naught; but that, for certain, is what he said.

"We have had no sport," says the lady. "Ah! but we have not been on the hills."

"Not on the hills?" cried Harry, amazed. "Why, 'tis the place of all others." Heaven forgive him the speech.

"The hills are not safe," said Sir Roger sharply. "The border Welsh——"

"Be all runagate cowards," Sir Harry murmured.

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"She came through the rippling water to the bank."

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The lady laughed.

"Surely we must take to the hills, Sir Roger?" said she.

"Nay, Elinor, in faith——"

"Why, do you fear, sir?"

"I fear naught for myself. But for you——"

"And I fear nor for you nor for myself, sir," said the lady sharply. To which there was no answer. What, indeed, could a lover say? And, having thus aided the course of love, Sir Harry removed himself. His conduct is worthy stern reproof, but mark what he did next!

Bertram he found alone and moody, painting a coat-of-arms. Sir Harry (oh, shame!) dissembled a grin and cried out fiercely—

"*Pardi*, Bertram. I have sought you long!" The Angel of Truth—if there be one—surely hid his face. "Lad, the fellow Roger is a fool. The mad hothead! Ah, *feu d'enfer*, the mad hothead! Guess what I have heard? Why, that on the morrow they would go a-hawking on the hills. Think, lad! To take a lady over the march! Oh!—fiend seize him!—sure he is mad! Nay; go he will! He'll not be stayed!" So the veracious Sir Harry—and backed his words with a whole mouthful of oaths.

Since this is a moral tale, let me point the lesson: Trust no man's version of another's words.

"Mad he must be," Bertram muttered with furrowed brow. For the danger was real, and he, the bred soldier, knew it better than a carpet knight such as Roger de Belesme. Feared it, too, more since he feared for one he loved, and the plump Roger only for his own skin. "Aye, mad he must be," muttered Bertram, gazing at Harry; and Harry gazed back and shook a solemn, reproving head at Sir Roger, his rashness. Then—

"By your leave, sir, the tailor," says Harry's squire, putting a solemn face round the curtain. Harry jumped and broke away.

Observe that I do not defend Sir Harry. His conduct was such as all persons of refinement must deplore. Nor now can I excuse him for demanding of the tailor four loose jerkins of yellow leather by the morrow's noon; nor deny that he swore when the tailor said it might not be. I find it very painful to relate that when the tailor meekly offered him buckram, professing that yellow buckram and yellow leather are the same to all men at two paces off, Sir Harry shook the tailor by both hands, and swore by St. Martha of Pewley that he would speak for the tailor in heaven. In fine, they agreed for four jerkins of yellow buckram. None grieves for the iniquity more than I who must relate it, for Aristotle ordains that to friends one ought to tell the truth. Truth-telling is my only joy.

Now we come on the steep, bare hills of the Welsh marches, hard by where Cwm now stands. See a knight and a lady riding, falcon on wrist. The knight peers about him every instant—is, in fact, an apprehensive and plump knight. Far away behind, the sun was glinting on another pair of golden spurs. Followed another knight, a big man, trotting easily, sparing his horse and choosing the best of the turf.

Northward, beyond a crag of limestone, a column of blue smoke smirched the air.

Sir Harry foretold sport. Sport, truly, was found. The two riders are dismounted, and knight and lady watch their falcons soar. The quarry, I think, was naught nobler than a raven, for what else they can have found on those hills, I could never guess. But sport they found. Behold, from that grey limestone crag break a troop of riders in the yellow jerkins of Wales. They scream shrill, haply in Welsh, and their long hair streams in the wind as they gallop. Most horrific are they. Fearsome the javelins they hurl from afar.

To the saddle sprang Sir Roger—never man mounted at better speed—and dashed in his spurs and galloped headlong away.

"Ride, Elinor, ride!" he cried bravely.

But ride, alack! she could not, for she had no horse. The whistling javelins, and the gleam of them had frighted her palfrey, and it broke away from her and fled. Alone she was left to face the most awesome charge of those yellow jerkins. Yelling they galloped on, and now she could see the foam on their horses, the white of the eyes behind the leather vizards. For they wore vizards of leather, these Welshmen, and yet no helmet, which was something strange.

The girl stood alone, straight and very white, one gauntleted hand on her heart. Out from the hillside above broke a great shout—

"*Maison du Roy! Maison du Roy!*" the hills echoed it rolling back. Galloping madly, down rushed Bedivere and Sir Bertram, an avalanche of war.

The Welshmen pulled up jerkily, looked long at the knight, appeared not to like the air of him. They shook their heads, laughed, and galloped off in the tracks of Sir Roger,

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who turned his head and saw them and spurred amain. For he judged that they had slain the lady, and had no wish to be with her in heaven for awhile. Yet he remembered to regret that she had been slain before he married her, and not after. Since she had died a maid, her lands, you see, passed to the Crown. So Sir Roger mourned his love and spurred and spurred.

"Knight and lady watch their falcons soar."

To the Lady Elinor, thus easily saved, came Sir Bertram, crying—

"Art hurt, lady?"

"Ah, 'tis you!" says she, and trembled a little. Down sprang Bertram and caught her hands.

"Art hurt?" he whispered, and his touch, his voice made her all rosy.

"Faith, no!" but she hung on his hands and looked into his eyes long. "But without you, sir——" she said softly. Then: "He—he fled and left me."

"He shall account!" said Bertram through his teeth. Still he held her hands.

"No." Bertram let her hands fall and drew back. She gave a queer little laugh. "What do I care if he flee or bide—such as he?" She stamped her little foot. "Shall I be prey of his, sir? I had rather lie under the sod!"

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"Coward and niderling he is!" said Bertram.

"Yet you brought me to him, knowing!"

"I knew not, lady, nor knew I you." A step he made to her, his eyes afire. His arm was round her—then suddenly back he sprang. Some sound had come to the quick soldiery ear—a sound with which the Yellow Jerkins on Sir Roger's trail had naught to do. With a muttered oath he caught her in his arms and swung to the saddle.

"Here be more!" he muttered in her ear. But she looked up smiling. At least she lay over his heart.

Now these new Welshmen wore yellow indeed, but they shouted not at all nor threw any spears. Two on little mountain ponies, a score on foot, came creeping round the shoulder of the hill. Far away down the valley across the road to safety a thin line of saffron marked another company of foot. Up and up the hill went Bedivere, labouring under the double burden. They struck the level track, and Bedivere was springing forward more freely when he felt the bit.

"Trust me, lady," Bertram whispered, and—

"Always," she said.

The two mounted Welsh broke into a gallop, for a tired horse with a double burden was to be an easy prey. Closer came the patter of the ponies' galloping hoofs, and the sword was not even drawn. Closer and closer yet. And Bertram lifted the girl and, leaning far back in the saddle, set her on the ground. Then on the instant at touch of spur round swung Bedivere, his hind-legs under him. Two feet Bertram swayed in the saddle, and the Welshman's spear rushed bootless by. Not so the Welshman. A mighty backward buffet sent him rolling down the hillside. Not so his fellow, whose spear was jerked from his hand and broken over his head. Stunned he fell, and Bertram vaulted down and snatched his shield, caught up the girl, and galloped away.

"Ah, my knight!" said the girl softly.

"The worst is not met," said Bertram, looking through the sunlight to the yellow coats of the footmen. The girl laughed low.

I have never been minded to envy those Welsh footmen who had to meet Sir Bertram charging down upon them with a girl on his heart. Many they were, and stout little men of their hands, and naught had Bertram save Bedivere's speed and his own sword-arm. Still I do not envy those Welshmen. In a cluster they gathered on the track to meet him, and Bertram gave one keen glance at the array, then caught the girl to him and kissed her fiercely.

"Once, love, once!" he muttered hoarsely, and the girl, crushed in his arms, clung to him closer yet.

And then a most strange thing befell. Rose on the air a roar—

"Points! Points!" Shoulder to shoulder, knee to knee, gleaming in chain mail, galloping down from the hill-top came four knights. There were Gilbert of Stoke, and Harold of Kenley, and Raoul de Dormont, and Harry of Silvermere. How can I tell what they were doing on the hills? Down they came, and those footmen in yellow stayed not to meet them—scattered, fled.

"*Pardi!* This was not in the plan—this was not at all in the plan," mutters Harry, reining up, and: "Oh, by the father of lies! now we must meet Bertram. . . . Raoul, if you laugh, I will break your crackling ribs!" There was a curious choking chuckle from the four. Then, wheeling round, they saluted Bertram gravely, and: "Sorely we grieve you have been troubled by these bickerings, lady," says Harry, solemn as an owl.

"The Lady Elinor is much beholden to you," says Bertram.

"These malapert Welsh!" cried Harry severely. Whereat Raoul gurgled, and the others looked fire and steel at him.

"In truth I thank you all. And they have done me no hurt," said Elinor, who was still between Bertram's arms. There was, you see, no other place.

So, all much content, they began to ride homeward.

"Did you mark that fire on the hills, Harry?" said Bertram.

"Faith, no!" says Harry. The four shaded their eyes and stared like one man. "But indeed——"

"That is a fire," said Gilbert hastily, who was expecting to hear Harry say it was a waterfall or a dragon, and wished to spare his conscience.

"'Tis on the hill," said Raoul.

"Most strange," said Harold. "But, faith! who knows the ways of the Welsh?"

While they are riding back to Whitchurch, let me tell what had happened there. King Edward was come back in high good humour, for all things now were ready for war. With Henry Lacy, the Earl of Lincoln, and Sir Stephen he was walking before his pavilion, when they saw Sir Roger de Belesme spurring over the mead.

"By Gabriel and Michael, here comes a

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"At touch of spur round swung Bedivere."

fat loon in haste!" says the king. "Why, 'tis my blissful bridegroom."

"Humph! And is he galloping from his bride or towards her?" growled the Earl of Lincoln.

"Faith, sir, you chose him not for his horsemanship!" said Sir Stephen, for Roger was rolling in the saddle. "*Mort de ma vie!* If the lady hath seen him on a horse, there will be trouble toward."

On came Roger, riding as men ride with white fear at their elbow, and—

"Hold you, sir!" cried the King, and Sir Roger turned his foaming, spur-galled steed, crying—

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"Ah, good my lord, aid!"

"Aid whom?" cried the King.

"The Lady Elinor. For she is dead!" gasped Roger, whose reason was left on the hillside.

"Dead?" The three roared out the word together.

"Aye, good my lord. Dead, my good lord. Slain by the Welsh."

"*Mort de Dieu!*" growled the King, drawing back. "Where, then, wert thou?"

"I—I could not save her, my lord," Sir Roger stammered.

"And so saved yourself. Humph! A bridegroom!" says the Earl of Lincoln.

"Do I learn that you fled?" said the King.

"Oh, good my lord, they were on us! She sillily let her palfrey go—they were fairly upon us; they were four to one. What else was I to do? What else had you done yourself, my good lord?"

Burst on him a volley of oaths from the Earl and Sir Stephen. But the King turned short on his heel, and—

"Ask this man where he left the Lady Elinor, Stephen," he said. For him thereafter Roger did not exist.

"Whence hast fled?" said Stephen curtly.

"Why, she would have me go hawking. Oh, by my faith, Sir Stephen, I told her 'twas madness! But go she would, and this is what she hath gained by it. See——"

"Ugh! Is it a man?" growled the Earl of Lincoln.

Then the King tapped him on the shoulder and pointed across the mead. Briskly a little troop was coming.

"Where was your lady slain?" cried Sir Stephen.

"She lies beyond the march. God assoil her!" says Roger, and crossed himself. "You dare not venture, sir."

"I? *Tête du diable!* I? Dare not?" spluttered Sir Stephen.

The King put a hand on his arm and drew him away, nodding at the riders. Nearer they came and nearer, and certainly you guess who they were.

"To me, gentlemen!" cried the King, and the four looked at each other, and—

"Nor was this in the plan, either," muttered Sir Harry.

The King went out to meet them. The King handed the lady down all blushing to earth, and as Bertram swung down stalwart beside her—

"Bertram? *Pardi!* I might have guessed it," he said with a smile. Then more gravely: "Lady, I fear you have been in sore danger."

The Lady Elinor fell before him in a curtsy and said in a low voice—

"So please you, my lord; but for this, my love"—she laid her hand in Bertram's arm and blushed—"I had been dead."

"*Mordieux!* Dead!" came in a rattling whisper from Raoul, and the other three, closing, pushed Raoul to the back.

And Sir Roger de Belesme fell a-gaping.

"Bertram was there?" said the King.

"By your leave, sir, 'tis well he was!" cried Sir Harry. "We others were riding on the march in hope of some small affray. Certain rogues in yellow we saw beset the lady, and Sir Roger nobly fled. We, alack! were too far from these knaves to aid. But for Sir Bertram, who saved her alone, unhelmed, unshielded, beating down two, I do not know where now she had been." And that was most true.

"Sir Harry forgets that he and his friends scattered a company of Welsh footmen," said Bertram.

"A right brave charge," said the lady, and Sir Harry grew very red, and he and his friends appeared uncomfortable.

"You were in danger. I am sorry," Harry muttered.

"But how came Bertram there?" said the Earl of Lincoln.

"My lord, I feared for my love."

"Knowing that rogue De Belesme? Right."

The King took the lady's hand. "Lady Elinor, I have come nigh to doing you a great wrong," he said, and she bowed her head and did not gainsay it. He laid her hand in Bertram's. "Now let it be mine at least to do this." And the man and the maid looked each in the other's eyes.

And Sir Roger de Belesme slunk away.

Now, Sir Harry in his lodging spoke with his fellows thus: "Thank the Virgin we were asked no questions!" and they laughed aloud. "But how a pox could I tell there would be real Welsh?" And they laughed louder. And all the while upon the hilltop *vestes de buckramo in flammis et igne solvebantur*, saith Fulke, which means, being interpreted, "the buckram coats burnt smokily."

So ends this moral tale. Observe herein, I pray you, how one sin leads to another. But for the King's hurry there had been no need for Sir Harry to make fiction, nor spend his money on buckram coats, nor had two real Welshmen gone home with broken heads. Blameless only are the two true lovers. Is it not a moral tale?

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WOODCRAFT.

By ERNEST THOMPSON SETON.*

MOST boys have the idea that wild animals are very rare now, or that you must go into the far West to find them. While this is true of some of the large kinds, it is yet safe to say that anyone can, within five miles, and usually much less, get into a region where he may discover *some* wild creatures. He may walk through a place again and again without seeing anything alive except a few birds, but he may be sure there were many bright eyes and keen ears and noses that were observing him and fully taking in the fact that their deadly enemy was passing near. Especially at night or late in the evening is this the case, for then the wild four-foots are on the move, and the hundreds of these that once used to roam by daylight have either been killed off or have learned to come out only at night, when men cannot see them. There may be many of these left in our little woods, and yet, unless knowing just how to look, one may pass many times and have no idea of their existence.

It is unfortunate for it, though lucky for the naturalist, that wherever a four-foot goes, it leaves behind a little written account of its visit, its name, the time, the place whence it came, what it did, and when and whither it went away. We can find these accounts and read them and thus learn of the numbers and kinds of our wild neighbours. These "manuscripts," though I should rather perhaps call them "pedo-scripts," are, of course, the tracks which the animals leave in the mud, snow, or dust.

Each animal makes its own kind of track; no two make exactly the same. The track of a fox is readily distinguished from that of a rabbit or small dog. And, more than that, the tracks of one fox may differ from that of his own brother, so that one can sometimes distinguish the tracks of a given individual, and by seeing it on

Yours cordially
Ernest Thompson Seton

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CAT'S TRACK: RIGHT FRONT-PAW.

CAT'S TRACK: RIGHT HIND-PAW.

DOG'S TRACK: RIGHT HIND-PAW.

DOG'S TRACK: RIGHT FRONT-PAW.

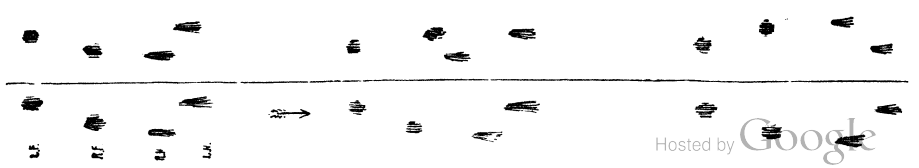
different occasions get something like an insight into its life. Thus, a famous grizzly in the West was known by his track. One of his toes had been cut off by a trap, and the difference that made in the mark was easy to see. To come nearer home, our common animals sometimes have unpleasant experiences with steel traps. The marks of these on their feet often add a peculiarity that identifies the animal; in other cases the track is extra large or small, or is crooked, but it always keeps the main features of its kind. The track of one sort of animal rarely need be mistaken for that of another, and the A B C of tracking is to learn the chief kinds of footmarks that are to be found in your region. The way to learn tracks is to draw those that you find, always sketching them right from Nature, never from memory, and it is always best to make them exactly life-size.

The snow is the best for tracking when you wish to follow the animal a long way and see what it is doing. But the snow rarely gives a perfect individual track. The mud and the dry dust, if not too deep, are much better for details. I have tried many ways of getting records of tracks, and have some interesting results, expecially among domestic animals. The dog and cat are the creatures whose tracks are likely to be first met with. But they are most aggravating subjects when one tries to get tracks from them. My first attempts were made with modelling-clay spread out thin on a tray; but both dog and cat would either bound over the tray, or wriggle or squirm or scratch it in long furrows, and, in short, do anything but walk calmly across and leave a few good impressions. One cannot take the animal's paw and make an imprint. That is sure to be wrong. The creature must do it itself and in its own way, and the track is sure to be spoiled if the animal is hurt or scared. Still, patience will surely win.

A good track, once secured, can be cast in plaster and kept for future use. While following tracks in Nature, one soon realises that not more than one in a thousand of those made is perfect. The accidents are so numerous that most of them are spoiled. It must be taken for granted, therefore, that a good many will be made in the modelling-wax or clay before getting a perfect set showing all the details and characteristics.

A thin coat of dry flour, plaster, dust, or other fine powder on a board gives a good impression, but it is difficult to make record of, sketching and photographing being the only ways. I have got a cat to make its own records by blacking its feet, then making it trot over some papers, and these are easier to read if the ink on the hind-feet be a different colour from that on the front. It is well, also, to clean the animal's feet afterwards, before it is allowed to enter the house.

A number of boys recently offered their help in getting a series of cat-paw prints. I gave them an idea of how to go about it. Their father kept a general country shop. So while one boy mixed a lot of lamp-black to the proper consistency, another helped himself to a roll of wall paper and spread it in a long corridor with the white side up, and the third went out and captured a large tom-cat. They now painted Tom's feet with the lamp-black, and chased him up and down the corridor till he was half crazy. Whenever they could catch him, they touched up



THE TRAILS OF A DOG WHEN GALLOPING.

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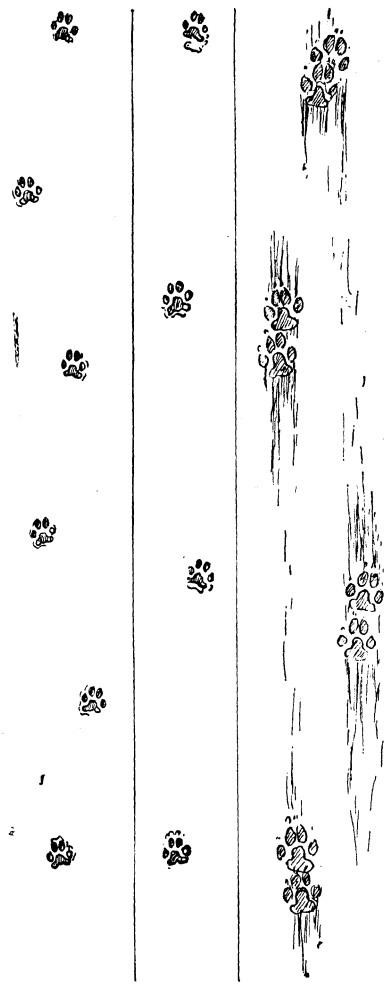
his feet afresh, and set him puffing and snorting over the paper. When they brought me the roll, it was thickly spotted over with tracks—most of them mere smears. Some, where Tom had slipped, were six inches long. The first after each fresh painting were too dark, and the last too faint, but still among the hundreds there were one or two good ones. This trifling success aroused the boys to high enthusiasm. At the beginning their energy had far overtopped their discretion, but now discretion dropped clear out of sight. They wished to beat their record, so they fairly soaked the cat's feet and legs in paint. Tom was, of course, thoroughly disgusted with the whole thing; he made a frantic jump and escaped through a transom, then upstairs, and so ended his troubles; but he ran over a white bedspread, where he left a beautiful trail, after which the boys' troubles began.

Most cats object strenuously to having their feet blackened, and an easier way is to lay a large piece of lamp-blacked or printer's-inked paper, so that the cat will walk over that first and then over the white paper. But these methods are not possible with wild animals. They will have nothing to do with your white and black papers. Even in menageries these are usually failures. It is very rarely that tracks in the mud are perfect enough or handy to be cast in plaster. As a matter of practice, I have found that sketching is the most reliable way.



TRAILS.

Of course, the first animal tracks one is likely to see are those of dogs and cats, and these are good to begin with. The cat is usually taken by the scientists as an example of a perfect animal. All its muscles and bones are of the highest type for activity and strength. Its track also affords a good study of what an animal's track should be, and in studying it we should remember that every curve and quirk has a history and a meaning.

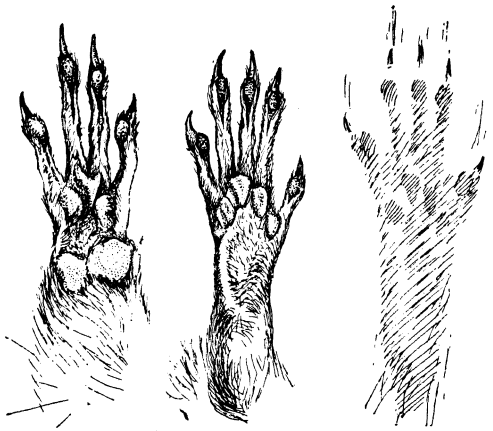
At first it seems that the toes are in two exact pairs; but you will find that they are arranged much like the fingers of a hand. The cat's thumb is so short and set so high up that it leaves no track. The two middle fingers are nearly alike, but the inner of these is always a little longer, as with us; the two outer ones look alike, but again, as with us, the one next the thumb is larger.

On the hind-foot the cat has but four toes, and these correspond nearly to the arrangement of those on the front-foot.

The dog's track differs from the cat's first in showing the claws. The cat's claws are perfect. They can be drawn back out of sight when not in use. The dog's are more like hoofs; they are always out, and leave their marks in the track. The trails of a dog and cat put together for comparison are shown in the illustration. The first thing that strikes us is that the cat walks as though it had two feet, whereas the dog shows the doubling of the track at each step. Of course, the cat's track was also doubled, but the hind foot went exactly on the mark left by the front foot, so that there seems to be but one. This is perfect tracking, and it is a great advantage to the animals that must hunt for a living. There are several reasons why this is so. A wagon whose hind-wheels do not follow exactly the track of the front-wheels is a hard wagon to draw in sand, mud, or snow; so also it is easier walking if the cat, going through snow or sand, has learned to set the hind-feet in the mark made by the front-feet.

But there is another reason and a better one. The cat sneaking through the underbrush after its prey must go in silence. It can see out of the corner of one eye where to

set down the front-feet, so as not to crush a dry stick or leaf, but it cannot watch its hind-feet. However, it does not need to do so; the hind-feet are so well trained that they go exactly into the safe places already chosen for the front-feet, and thus the cat moves in perfect silence. All wild animals that sneak after their prey do thus; no doubt the dog did at one time, just as the wolf does to-day, but he has lived so long in town and walked so much on side-walks that he has forgotten the proper way, and so is a very noisy walker in the woods.



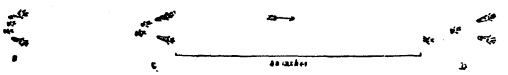
RED-SQUIRREL. RIGHT FORE-FOOT. RED-SQUIRREL. RIGHT HIND-FOOT. OF THE GREY- OR RED-SQUIRREL.

The cat is little changed in habits since it came to live with man. It is still a hunter and walks as it ought.

In studying these things, one must always keep in mind the great individual variation. For example, not only is the track of a cat never exactly like that of any other animal, but no two cat tracks are exactly alike, and the track made by one of the cat's feet is never exactly like that made by another of its feet.

A third striking difference between the tracks of dog and cat is that most dogs drag their toes. This shows clearly if there are five or six inches of snow. A cat lifts its feet neatly and clear of whatever it is walking in.

In trotting, a dog's track is usually like its walking track, with the steps nearly double as long, but some times it goes with its body diagonally, apparently so that its feet will not interfere,

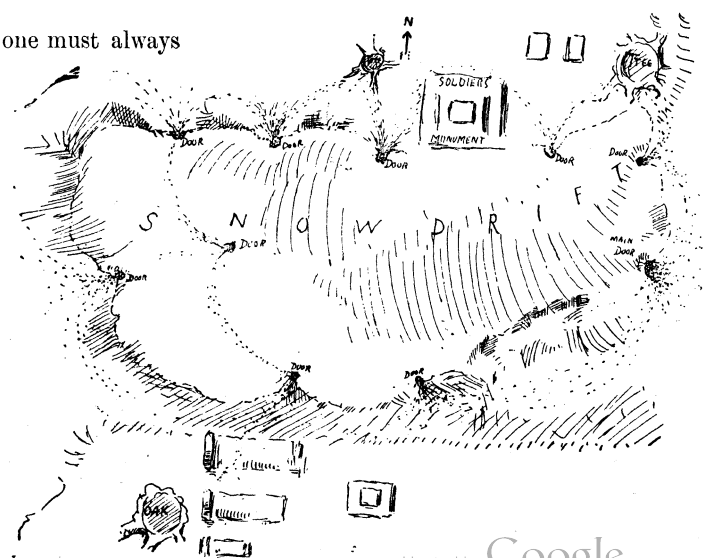


RED-SQUIRREL TRAIL.

and this shows another variation of the trail.

A dog galloping goes as shown on page 456. It will be seen that the hind-feet overreach the fore-feet each time, and track farther, as is the case with all bounding animals. The right fore-paw is ahead of the left at each bound: this is what I should call a right-handed gallop. Some dogs are left-handed, and always run with the left paw ahead. Then again, some dogs will do both ways within a short distance. In the upper part of the same illustration is a trail that shows where a dog changed thus from right to left.

One of the commonest of the truly wild animals still found generally is the squirrel. It is a remarkably hardy, active, and vigorous animal. It has succeeded in maintaining itself in spite of settlement and deforesting, chiefly because it can live in holes in the ground. As a rule, the truly forest animals are the first to fly before the settler. The ones that hold out the longest are those that cling to



RED-SQUIRREL'S WINTER PALACE.

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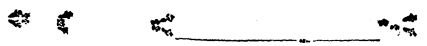
Mother Earth as a final refuge, and this the red-squirrel does very successfully.

The tracks of the common squirrels are alike in general features, but differ in size and details. A red-squirrel's hind-foot is about two inches long, a grey-squirrel's about two and a half inches, and a fox-squirrel's nearly three inches.



TRACK OF A FOX-SQUIRREL.

Here is the paw of a red-squirrel showing the sole of the hind-foot covered with hair. The grey- and fox-squirrels have a naked heel-pad, but it rarely shows in the track.

The hind-track of a squirrel shows five toes, but the fore-track only four—the thumb of the fore-paw being so small that it is like a knob and does not count.

FOX-SQUIRREL'S TRACKS (REDUCED).

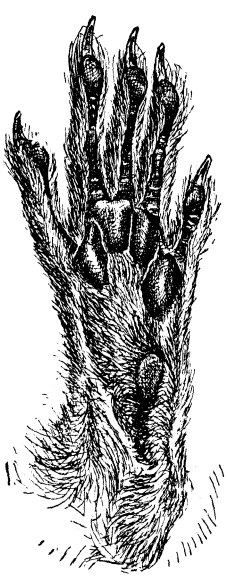
Now to go back to the woods near home. If I were seeking for animals at such a place, I should set about taking the census of the four-foots by looking for tracks and signs—beginning first along the bare, muddy or sandy edges of the brooks or ponds, if there are any, and particularly near large old trees, because these old trees usually have hollows in them, which furnish safe homes to animals that could not otherwise live.

One day in January, finding myself with some spare hours in a small country town, I asked the hotel-keeper if there were any squirrels to be seen in or near the town. He said: "No; they're all shot off long ago."

But I walked on beyond the houses, and there getting a view of some woods half a mile away, I cut across fields in that direction. At a fence near the woods I found where a dog had chased something that ran along the top rail. Some snow in a crotch showed the sign given on page 458, and I knew that was the trail of either a small grey- or red-squirrel, probably the creature chased by the dog.

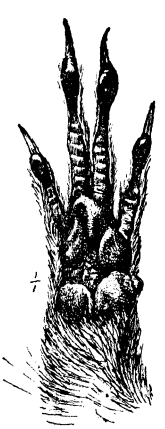
The woods turned out to be a cemetery, and I found that the melancholy place was the happy home of a family of red-squirrels. I did not see them, as it was late, but I found their trails in abundance.

They had one or two hollow trees of refuge, but they also had holes under the monuments and gravestones. This was what made me sure they were reds; the greys do not make

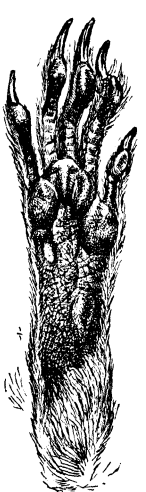


FOX-SQUIRREL'S RIGHT HIND-FOOT.

FOX-SQUIRREL'S RIGHT FORE-FOOT.



GREY-SQUIRREL'S RIGHT FORE-FOOT.



GREY-SQUIRREL'S RIGHT HIND-FOOT.

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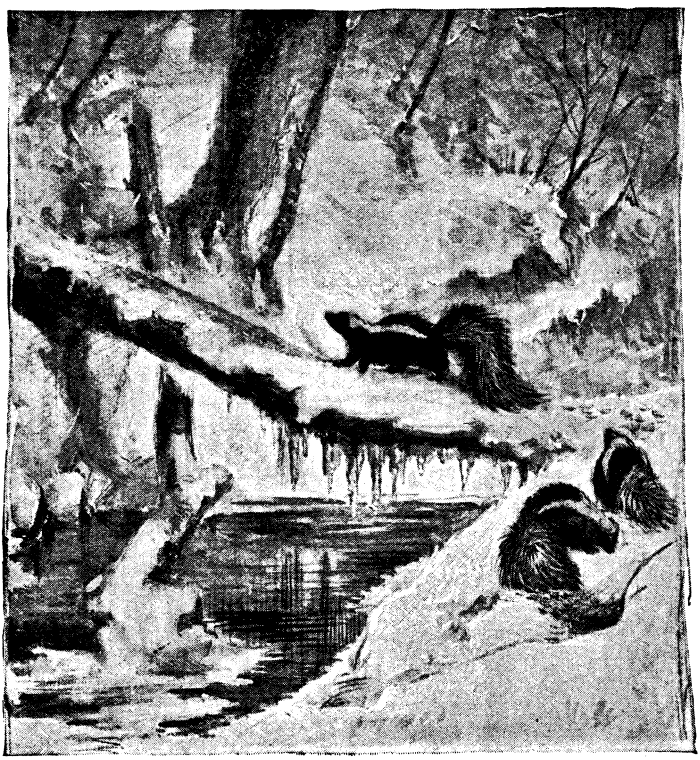
holes in the ground. A quarter of a mile off was a barn, and the snow on the fence between showed that the squirrels ran there when they needed corn.

But the most interesting thing in that graveyard was a snowdrift playground. The squirrels had made a labyrinth of galleries in the drift. Around the entrances I found the remains of nuts and pine-cones, so maybe their winter-palace was banquet-hall as well as gymnasium, but I could not examine it fully without destroying it, so I let it alone. This winter palace of the squirrels lay between the graves of a family that had died some time before, and those of some soldiers who had lost their lives in war, but doubtless the squirrels found it the merriest place on earth.



"THE SKUNK USED THE BRIDGE, A TREE FALLEN ACROSS THE RIVER."

In studying trails, one must always keep probabilities in mind. Sometimes one kind of track looks much like another; then the question is: Which is the likeliest in this place?

If I saw a cougar track in India, I should know it was made by a leopard. If I found a leopard trail in Colorado, I should be sure I had found the mark of a cougar, or mountain lion. A wolf track in London would doubtless be the doing of a very large dog, and a St. Bernard's footmark in the Rockies twenty miles from anywhere would most likely turn out to be the happen-so imprint of a grey-wolf's foot. To be sure of the marks, then, one should know all the animals that belong to one's neighbourhood.

The way to learn the tracks themselves is by drawing them, so that you will not come to your teacher and say: "I saw a queer track to-day; I can't just describe it, but, oh! it was so queer," but rather: "I saw a queer track to-day. There is the picture I made of it." Then you will surely get light sooner or later.

Once I was much puzzled by seeing in the snow a mark like the one shown on page 461. I had never seen one like it before, so I sketched it and put it away. Later I learned by accident that this was the trail left by a cock-sparrow strutting in the snow before his chosen bride.

In the mud I once found another puzzle that also turned out to be a very common thing, for it was only the trail of a turtle.

Having begun in this way, you will be surprised to find, first, how many different animals are still living in your supposed barren woods; and second, how blind you have heretofore been when among them.

While drawing must be relied on mostly for track studies, it is also well to remember that imprints of any kind made by the animals themselves are much more valuable. The information in a drawing is usually limited by the knowledge of the draughtsman. But the real imprint is always ready to answer new questions, and to answer them with perfect reliability. For this reason it is well to get a series of ink tracks made by the animals themselves.

While in Marshalltown, Iowa, recently, I found a most obliging tame fox-squirrel who

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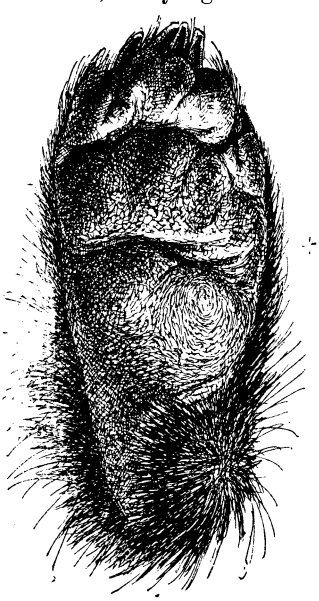
THE TRAIL OF A SKUNK.

supplied me with a series of records that help to explain the tracks of all squirrels. These were obtained by making the squirrel run over a printer's-inked strip of paper, then across a long, white strip. This animal differed from others of his kind in turning out his hind-toes so much: I think that I could recognise his track by this, combined with his small size.

The tracks must always be compared with the foot, to be rightly understood. The illustrations on page 459 show the feet of a fox-squirrel, life-size; and the record made direct from the squirrel's own track shows its relationship to the foot.

The track of an ordinary fox-squirrel running over the ground is also given. This shows the longest jump I ever saw made by a fox-squirrel on the ground—that is, forty-eight inches clear. Their ordinary hop in going over the snow is about fourteen or fifteen inches clear.



SKUNK'S RIGHT HIND-FOOT.

The grey-squirrel's track differs from that of the fox-squirrel's chiefly in being smaller. There are many differences in their feet, as will be seen by comparing the illustrations; but these rarely show in the trail. The squirrel type of fore-paw is a 4, 3, 2 arrangement of pads—that is, four finger-tip pads, three finger-base pads, and two palm-pads. As with us, the finger that seems to lack the base-pad is the second from the outside.

One day, as I walked through a small town in New England, a boy addressed me by name and asked if it were possible to find any wild animals in that neighbourhood. It was about one hour before sundown, so I said: "Can you, without going too far, show me a wood with a stream through it?"

He said that he could, and after a ten-minute walk, we stood in a little valley full of second-growth timber. The snow was still on the ground, so I made a wide sweep, and at length came on a trail.

"What is that?" said he.

"That is a cat track."

"Why, I didn't know they came away out here!"

"That may possibly be the track of your own cat. They are such wanderers."

SKUNK'S RIGHT FORE-FOOT

As we swung around a corner of the woods and climbed a stone fence, we came on a track that is very unmistakable—the track of a skunk.

"Yes, I knew there were skunks about. I sometimes smelled them," the boy said.

We followed this for half an hour, winding in and out among the trees, sliding down banks or galloping across little hollows; once or twice going out a little way into the open, where its track was lost on the hard ground, then back into the woods, where it was very easy to read. We followed

THE TRAIL OF A COCK-SPARROW.

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it in many wanderings; apparently it was seeking for food, but it certainly found none. Their food must be very scarce in the early spring, and that, no doubt, is why they need the immense store of fat that their bodies contain when first they are called out by the returning warm weather.

There is at least one satisfactory thing about a skunk track. You know it will not go far. You may follow a fox track all day and see nothing of fox or den, but a skunk is a slow traveller, and usually an hour's following will show you where he lives.

At length the skunk track neared the stream, which was in a deep bed with steep banks. On the other side we could see several similar tracks leading to a most interesting hole that was doubtless the family headquarters. The skunk had evidently gone home over there, but how did he cross this deep ditch, with its ice-cold, unfrozen flood? A little examination showed how. He did just as any sensible animal would do when he did not wish to get wet—he used the bridge, and that bridge was simply a tree fallen across the river. I sketched it, and have the drawing as an unanimal memento of an animal hunt. But I have here put in a couple of skunks, to show the family going out for a ramble.

We travelled yet farther, then came on a new trail.

"There," said I, "is the track of a grey-squirrel. You see, the hind-foot was nearly three inches long—too long for a red-squirrel, and it cannot be a fox-squirrel, as they do not come into this region. Here is where probabilities help."

"But there are no grey-squirrels around here, either," said the boy. "I have often looked, and never yet saw one."

"You think not; but see, we have here his own account of the visit; the track won't tell a lie. He was running that way; you see the large tracks made by the hind-feet are in advance, because he was going fast."

Over the snow it was, of course, easy to follow; but we came to a long, open stretch of hard, bare ground, at the north end of which was a grove of small pine trees. Around the sides were thickets of saplings, and lying uphill through the saplings at the south was a large, fallen tree.

"Now," said I, "the squirrel would not go to those small pines, because they are never hollow and have no food to offer. We cannot follow his trail here on the bare ground. Do you know of any big, old trees in the neighbourhood?"

He thought a minute, then said: "Yes, there are two old white oaks off this way"—and he pointed over the hill—"and some old beeches down that other way."

"Have any of them dead tops?" said I.

"Yes, the oaks have."

"Then that means they are hollow, and the squirrel lives there. We shall certainly find that he ran up that sloping log, since it is in line with the oaks."

We went to the place and found the squirrel tracks. Of course, the bare log gave no record, but the trail reappeared at the end, and led, as expected, towards the two oaks. Sometimes it disappeared entirely, when the squirrel had gone aloft to travel along the branches. But we now knew his direction. At one place it came down and led to a large hole in a bank. The snow was padded about the hole. It seemed to be the residence either of a woodchuck or a skunk, I could not tell which. It did not smell like skunk, but it is not usual for a woodchuck to come out so much when the snow is deep.*

Why the squirrel should busy himself about the hole, I do not know. On the snow about the big oaks we found numberless squirrel tracks of more than one size, and far up were several large holes, undoubtedly the doorways of the squirrels' home. These squirrels I did not see. None of the hunters in town knew that they were there, they had become such experts at hiding. But now the boy knew their home, he began to watch them, and he and they got quite well acquainted. Thus, thanks to the tracks, he got not only an insight into the life of a grey-squirrel, but also an insight into himself, and learned that it was possible to see a wild animal without wishing to kill it.

This is the sort of teaching that these wild neighbours of ours can do for us.

I suppose that every boy loves to "play Injun." It was one of my greatest pleasures, and I often wished for someone who could teach me more about it. That does not mean that I wanted to be a cruel savage, but rather that I wanted to know how to live in the woods as he does, and enjoy and understand the plants and living creatures that are found there. These papers are being written to teach every boy to do this, and to get the most pleasure possible out of playing Red Man.

* Later that year the boy wrote me that it turned out to be a woodchuck's den.

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MRS. CROMWELL'S HEART.

By JUSTUS MILES FORMAN,*

Author of "The Garden of Lies."

RS. CARTWRIGHT dashed into the drawing-room some fifteen minutes after her guests had come down to dinner.

"Oh, yes, I know I'm late!" she said plaintively. "You needn't tell me I'm late. And in one's own house, it's not civil, is it? But I'm always late, you know. Carol will have explained that to you." She kissed Beatrice Cromwell on both cheeks and gave Cromwell a hand.

"I can't help feeling," she said, "that I've got you out here into the country, the—what is it Carol calls it?—'the tall grass,' under false pretences. Fancy asking you here to meet the Eversham, and then not producing a single Eversham! You see, Lady Eversham caught a silly cold, or something, and it threatens to become something even sillier, so they had to stop in town. Of course, we've still the lion. Where is he, by the way? Not down yet?"

"The lion?" asked Mrs. Cromwell. "I didn't know you had a lion. How nice! Who is it?"

"Oh, it's the great Wareham," said Alice Cartwright. "Wareham, the painter-man, you know. Larrabee Wareham — Larry Wareham. Did you happen ever to meet him when you were living in Paris?" And then, after her custom of not waiting for an answer, she went on: "He's such a very satisfactory lion, my dear! Always does quite the right thing, and every woman adores him. I adore him frantically myself. Men like him awfully, too—don't they, Carol?" she demanded, turning to her husband.

One of Carol Cartwright's eyebrows went up the slightest fraction of an inch, and he waited a barely perceptible instant.

"Oh, yes, yes! Quite so!" he said. "Yes, I fancy they do! Of course, I don't know him very well myself—— Oh, he's coming, I think!"

Wareham came into the room in as nearly breathless a state as one could conceive to be possible in so very immaculate a young man.

"I'm a pariah and an outcast," he said to his hostess—"quite beyond the pale of forgiveness; but it truly isn't my fault. There were no waistcoat buttons. My man is a very estimable and kind-hearted person, but he will forget waistcoat buttons. Peters had to hunt me out some of Mr. Cartwright's." He looked towards the other two guests, and Mrs. Cartwright said—

"Oh, yes, you don't know the others, do you? Mrs. Cromwell, let me present Mr. Wareham." And to Wareham: "The gentleman standing proudly one pace to the rear is Mr. Cromwell." But in the middle of the last sentence her voice faltered and nearly stopped dead, and a certain light of interest grew in her eyes, for she could not help noticing that Beatrice Cromwell had gone unnaturally white, and that she would not meet Wareham's gaze when she murmured the conventional words of greeting. Even Cromwell, Mrs. Cartwright noted, looked ill at ease and did not offer the other man his hand—merely bowed and said: "How do you do?"

During dinner she watched very eagerly for further signs and portents, but there were none. Also none appeared later during the evening, and, at last, when Mrs. Cartwright went to bed, she said to herself, disgustedly, that she had been entirely too ready with her suspicions.

The men, left below, had gravitated to the billiard-room, and after a sketchy game of pool had settled themselves very comfortably on the leather cushions in one corner of the room. Carol Cartwright had taken the second sip from his long drink, when the butler called him to the door. He returned in a moment with concern and apology in his face.

"Can you chaps make yourselves comfortable for an hour without me?" he said. "I've got to go over to the farm. My farmer man there has had a fit or a stroke of some-

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thing, it appears. He's a good old chap. I must have a look at him. I shall be back in an hour."

The other two men said: Yes, of course, it was all right, not to think of them; and then, when Cartwright had gone, each of them drew a rather long breath and took a further look at the other over the top of his glass. Cromwell threw away his cigar and lighted a cigarette, which he smoked half down in silence, flicking off the ash with an abstracted finger. He was a rather handsome man, somewhere between thirty and thirty-five, with a square face and a mouth that closed straight and still. He had played football in his college days, and now he played polo and squash in the intervals of burning incense before his beautiful wife.

"I'm glad Carol has gone," he said at last, looking up at the other man with a little, nervous laugh of apology for his words. "You see," he said, "I—this gives me a chance to—I want to talk to you about something rather frankly—that is, if you don't mind——"

The smoke stood still for an instant over the other man's cigar, and his eyes narrowed a bit, but his voice, when he spoke, seemed entirely natural and at ease.

"Right!" said he. "Fire away! I don't know what you want to talk about, but—fire away! I'm listening."

"Well, you see," said Cromwell, and halted again, frowning down at the cigarette which he held between his fingers. "You see——" he repeated, and stuck. He seemed unable to choose his words.

"I've been married," he said, "a bit more than a year now. You know."

"Yes," said the other man in an odd, still tone. "Yes, I know."

"I married a girl," said Cromwell, smoking rapidly, "who was—and is—several thousand times too good for me, you know."

"Oh, my dear chap," said the painter, "who doesn't marry a girl a thousand times too good for him?"

"And," said Cromwell, as if he had not been interrupted, "a girl who—who was not only too good for me, but who was—in love with another man."

"Ah!" breathed Mr. Wareham in that same still tone.

"How she happened to marry me," Cromwell went on, "God knows—God and she. Neither one has ever explained it to me. Perhaps it was because she knew how very much I—I cared about her, because she knew how I should always care for her, whether she cared for me or not. Perhaps that was why."

"But the other man," questioned Wareham gently, and once more the smoke stood still over his cigar. He did not raise his eyes. "The other man!" he said. "Why didn't she marry him? Or is that also the secret in God's keeping and hers?"

"He never asked her to marry him," said Cromwell. "He didn't want to marry her. He wasn't a marrying man." He spoke in a tone in which wonder and a sort of fierce resentment were blended. "Fancy a man caring about—*her*," he said, "and not wanting to marry her! I can't—I can't see it at all, you know." Then suddenly an odd little flare of nervous anger seemed to rise in him. "Oh, hang this farce!" he cried. "Why can't we speak out? We might as well speak out. Beatrice was in love with you, Wareham, at the time she married me. She had been in love with you, I fancy, for a long time—two or three years. She—she told me so very frankly before we were married. She warned me that she wasn't at all sure she'd ever get over it. She wanted to make it plain on what grounds she was—coming to me—just how little she had to offer me. She—Bee has odd little moods, now and then, of wanting to confess—like a child, just like a child!—wanting to make a clean breast of everything she's got on her mind. She—told me that she cared for you, but that you'd never asked her to marry you. At first, in the beginning of it, she says she thought you were going to. You'd—told her you—loved her, and she expected that as a natural consequence. Then she began to wonder and wait, and wait, and then she fell ill, and—well, you didn't seem very much alarmed about her, and, at last, after a long time, she—understood. That hurt, I expect, pretty badly. Yes, I expect that hurt. Well, she came back to America, and I asked her for the hundredth time to marry me, and at last she said 'Yes.'" The other man raised his head as if he meant to speak, but Cromwell held up a hand to check him.

"Let me finish first! This is all by the way of leading up to something—something I want to ask of you. When I said, a moment ago, that Bee *had been* in love with you at the time she married me, I didn't put the thing accurately. I told the truth, but not, I believe, the whole truth. What has made me talk to you about all this, to-night, is that I believe she still cares for you."

Wareham gave a sudden, astonished cry,

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"Reminiscent, as are all long-forgotten odours, of one's far-away, unspoiled youth."

and the cigar dropped from his raised fingers, covering his knees with ashes.

"Still—cares for me?" he said, staring at the other man. "For *me?* Oh, you're—it's impossible, impossible!"

"I think not," said the woman's husband. "I believe she still cares for you, and so is—and so finds it impossible to—— A woman cannot really love two men at once." He threw out one hand in a nervous, overwrought gesture.

"Can't you see what I'm shooting at?"

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he said desperately. "Can't you see what I mean? Here's your chance, your chance to make up for what you did before. You broke a woman's heart then. That woman is unhappy now because of it. Don't you see what you've a chance to do?"

Wareham shaded his eyes with his hand and continued to watch the other man's troubled, twitching face.

"Frankly," he said, "I don't. I'm quite in the dark. Granted all you've been saying is true—granted, for the sake of argument, it's true and pitiful enough, hideous enough, God knows! Still, I don't see what—reparation you have in mind. No, I'm quite in the dark."

"Make her cease caring for you!" said Cromwell. "Make her despise you, hate you! Give her some reason, real or trumped up, that will turn her love to dislike and disgust. There's your chance to save her happiness. I tell you," he cried, "I could win her love even now, even after this time, if you would do that. Sometimes I've thought I was on the very edge of it, and then—she was back in her shell again, out of my reach. There's your chance! Are you man enough to take it?"

Wareham rose abruptly to his feet and began to pace back and forth across the room, smiting his hands together before him. The situation, with its wholly unlooked-for drama, appealed keenly to his histrionic nature. A pleased, excited little laugh forced itself to his lips as he moved across the room. He was a great painter, in spite of his youth. About that there could be no argument; but to the forming of that chemical combination which had, as it were, surcharged one section of his brain, had gone certain elements whose presence elsewhere was sadly needed. To put the thing very briefly, he had, to the full, that triple nature, child-devil-God, which we call the artistic temperament.

As he moved back and forth, he was swiftly constructing and visualising a dramatic little scene between himself and Beatrice Cromwell, in which he was to enact, as it were, the combined *rôle* of hero and villain. The fact that he must make himself appear to her in an objectionable light moved him to no great regret. The acting value of the part outweighed that.

It was quite characteristic that in his train of thought there was not one true, manly element of generosity, not one. The fact that it was a good deed, that it was in reparation of a wrong once done, never occurred to him. He thought of nothing but the sheer picturesqueness of the part he was to play.

He halted in his walk before the other man, and looked down at him with exactly the right sort of smile—frank, open, honest, eager to make amends.

"I'll do it," he said.

Beatrice Cromwell came down to breakfast the next morning half an hour later than her husband, whom she found alone in the breakfast-room finishing his coffee.

"Oh," said he, "it appears that Carol's farmer man died last night of a stroke of something. Very sad indeed! Had a young wife, recently married. Carol and Mrs. Cartwright have gone over to the farmhouse. We shan't see them before lunch, I fancy. They left all sorts of apologies for you."

Mrs. Cromwell said she was sorry, and expressed some sympathy, but she said it so absently and without concern that her husband looked up at her in surprise.

"It's a fine morning," he said. "We might go for a bit of a walk through the gardens and across the fields when you've finished breakfast—that is, if it wouldn't bore you." There was an odd, shy wistfulness in his tone which had become habitual with him in speaking to her, and Mrs. Cromwell noticed it and looked up to meet his eyes.

"I should like it very much," she said. "Shall we go now? I don't think I want any breakfast. I had a cup of tea in bed."

They went out across the broad lawn which lay before the country house, and down through the box-bordered, gravel-pathed, formal esplanade beyond, and so into a tangle of old-fashioned garden where were hollyhocks, leaning drunkenly, and larkspur and mignonette and cockscombs and love-in-a-mist and sweetwilliam, and all such delightful things, odorous under the warm morning sun, potently reminiscent, somehow, as are all long-forgotten odours, of one's far-away, unspoiled youth—reminiscent almost to the point of tears.

Mrs. Cromwell threw back her head, with closed eyes, drawing in the heavy, mingled fragrance, and something very like a sob broke from her, but her husband made a sudden exclamation.

"My pipe!" he said. "I've come away and left my pipe. I must fetch it, Bee." His wife laughed.

"Tobacco!" she cried. "You're going to profane this heavenly place with tobacco? How very like a man! Be quick, then. I'll walk slowly on." Cromwell went back

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"'Ah, Betty! if it weren't done with!'"

towards the house, and the woman moved on past tangled banks of spicy sweetness, and presently came out into an open circle of turf, where stood a vine-wreathed sundial and—one beside it who waited with level, unsmiling eyes for her approach.

She did not see him till she was very near, then she caught her breath quickly and made as if she would turn aside with only a bow. Then she stopped, looking into his face.

"Well, Betty?" said the man.

"What—have you and I to—say to each other?" she asked. "Let me go on my way."

"Betty!"

"Why should you wish," she demanded, "to dig up dead things? Let them lie. They—wouldn't look well in the light, and—you'd be uprooting roses and things, maybe, that had grown above." The speech, in black and white, has a florid, over-poetical ring, but she had a way of saying just such whimsical, oddly conceived things, in any mood, and somehow they came from her with perfect naturalness.

Wareham gave a little, gentle laugh. The speech had been so like Betty.

"Dead?" said he, following her whim. "Why not laid away in lavender and orris? Dead, Betty? There's nothing indecent in peeping into old boxes, reading old letters." But the woman shook her head, frowning, then laughed for a moment, an angry laugh, as it were of anger at herself.

"That was very silly of me!" she said sharply, "very silly, and a bit melodramatic. I fancy I'm in a fit of nerves through not sleeping too well. Come, we'll start all over again." She put out her hand to him, smiling.

"Good morning, Larry," she said. "I'm very, very glad to see you. I was a beast to be nasty when we met last evening I was—surprised, that was all. Larry, it must be—nearly two years since we've seen each other. Yes?"

He had taken her hand rather sulkily. This new mood of hers had pleased his vanity less than the earlier one, but he was no boy, and he knew that there were many feints in that game called love.

"Twenty-two months," he said. "Come! Let's get out of this. The sun is growing hot here. Shall we walk over to that belt of woodland yonder? I came upon a particularly jolly spot there an hour ago. There's a spring and a fallen tree, and a bank of fresh turf."

They crossed the intervening stretch of open field and entered the shade of the trees, from under which the lower growth had been cut away, and came at last to a spurting, bubbling spring, where moss and watercress grew, and where there was a great, fallen tree-trunk, half overgrown, and a clear space of green turf. The sunlight came through the thick leaf shelter overhead in stirring flecks of gold like a light shining through stained glass into a dark room.

"Oh, beautiful!" cried Beatrice Cromwell. "Oh, beautiful, Larry! What is it I immediately think of? What is it this place so oddly re-creates?" Then she cried out suddenly—

"Clamart!" And at exactly the same instant Wareham said it too.

"Clamart!" she cried. "The Meudon Wood, near the Fontaine de Sainte Marie!" And the two stood nodding at each other and laughing excitedly, like two children who have guessed a puzzle.

"Clamart!" she said presently under her breath. "What heaps of recollections!" Then she turned to the man beside her, still smiling absently.

"Let's talk about you, Larry," she said. "What great things you've done, haven't you? How high you've climbed! Of course, you'd done great things even then, when I—knew you, and you'd climbed very high, but only a few of us knew it. Now everybody knows, and I'm so glad!" She nodded at him, laughing. "You know I'm very proud of you," she said. "I feel that sort of small proprietorship in you that one feels who has known intimately any great man. When people rave to me over your pictures, I always want to cry out: 'Why, I knew him long before any of the rest of you did! You can't tell *me* anything about him. I talked with him about that very picture before it was painted. There's some of me in it.' That's what I always want to say to them."

"Oh, please, please!" protested Wareham, reddening, and the woman laughed again. "*Please* don't let us talk about me!" he begged. "I—I feel such a fool. Let's talk about Clamart and—us. Do you remember——?" And then they were off upon that endless river of reminiscence which engulfs two people new-met after long separation. When one finished a topic, the other was always ready with an eager: "Do you remember——?" until Beatrice Cromwell's cheeks were flushed and burning, and her eyes very bright and wide, like the eyes of a child who listens to fairy stories.

Wareham had not forgotten the task to which he was pledged. He kept it well in mind; but for a little time, he said to himself, it could wait. There was no great hurry. This harking back to old days was very delightful. It had a tender, half sweet, half sad flavour—an autumnlike flavour, as he put it, which moved him. Also he was aware, with a dull surprise, that the strong attraction, the magnetism which this woman's presence had used to throw over him, was oddly potent even now. As a rule, he disliked meeting women with whom he had had the rather serious affairs which he liked to call flirtations. They roused in him a certain

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self-reproach, an uncomfortable sense of repudiated obligation. They affected him like the sight of long-unpaid bills, and the sensation was so strong that no other had power beside it. This time, however, the other sensation burned brightest. The embers, hidden among dead ashes, awakened to a flicker of warmth and blaze.

Still, he made a weak effort to do what he had set out to do.

"I would to Heaven, Betty," he said bitterly, "that in those days of ours—those days when you loved me—I had been more worth your love! I would to Heaven I'd been nearer what you thought I was! I was a bad lot, my dear, a rotten bad lot, even then—rotten to the core!" The woman gave a sharp exclamation, half under her breath. It was not a word, only an inarticulate cry. It might have meant almost anything. But Wareham did not look at her. He went on speaking.

"I can admit it now," he said. "You—don't care now. Our game of hearts is done with—at least, *you've* done with it!" He could not help that. It fairly said itself. "Ah, Betty, Betty! if it weren't done with!" That said itself, too. In some extraordinary fashion the thing was getting out of hand, away from his control. A fever beyond his ken was beginning to shake in him, and he was frightened.

He looked up, and Betty Cromwell's face was very white, dead white, and her eyes seemed unnaturally great and black and burning, and tears brimmed in them. This, too, might have meant, if not quite anything, at least several things, but to Wareham the meaning seemed unmistakable. The last rein of control snapped. For the first time in his life an unfettered surge of emotion swept over and engulfed him. For the first time in his life he completely lost his head.

"By Heaven, Betty!" he cried trembling, "it shan't be done with! Betty, Betty, it has all been a ghastly mistake, this last two years. I tell you we belong, we were meant for each other. Look at me, Betty! I swear I've always loved you from the first day, the very first day. Betty, come with me, and we'll patch it up somehow, all this rotten tangle. Chuck that wooden image of a husband of yours and come with me. What's a dolt of a husband when two people were made for each other, as we were? I tell you, if there's a God up aloft there, He meant us for each other. Betty, I can't see or hear or think anything but love for you. *Won't* you chuck it all and come away?"

It was not a pretty sight. A man suddenly bereft of self-control is always something to shrink from, and this man was for the moment a chattering, stammering imbecile. Why such a sudden mad gust of passion should have seized upon him just then, is difficult to guess. Possibly God was at last paying him out.

Beatrice Cromwell drew away from him along the great tree trunk, staring in dumb, stricken amazement. When she came to the end of the tree trunk, she got somehow to her feet, but Wareham, shaking and stammering, was close upon her and caught her hands in his.

"Will you come, Betty? Will you come?" he cried. "Ah, such a life we'll have! Will you come?" Then she screamed and thrust him away from her with all the strength she had, and she was a tall, strong woman—stronger, probably, than he. He fell, twisting and stumbling, and caught himself by the branches of a near-by shrub.

"Oh, you—you beast!" said Beatrice Cromwell. "Oh, you—*beast!* If I were strong enough, if I'd a weapon here, I'd—I think I should try to kill you!" She looked at the man crouched against the shrub, staring lividly up at her, and her white face twisted in a sort of paroxysm of shame and rage. She was so terribly angry that she could hardly speak.

"To think that I could ever have—loved such a *thing!*" she said. "You cowardly, lying, play-acting *thing!* I cannot call you a man. That is a word you never knew the meaning of. Oh, to think I once—loved you, you cur, you smirking, pretending cur!" She did not raise her voice. She could not. She was so intensely angry that the words came from her in an odd, low, jerking voice, terribly distinct, but without expression. She wrung the hands his hands had touched.

Wareham stumbled to his feet, breathing hard.

"I didn't—I thought you—I didn't know!" he said, looking to right and left. "Forgive me, Betty! I was——"

"Thought!" she cried. "What right have you to think anything about me? What right have you to come to *me* with your contemptible thoughts—to beg *me* to go away with you? *Why?*" she said, in a sudden flare of passion. "Why? For Heaven's sake, why? Why come to *me?*"

That stung him into snapping back: "Why not?" he sneered. "You don't give a hang for your husband!" For an instant she looked at him in silence.

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"She screamed and thrust him away from her with all the strength she had."

"May I ask your reasons for thinking that?" she inquired presently in a level tone.

"Never mind my reasons," said he. "It's true, isn't it?"

"Oh!" said Beatrice Cromwell, wringing her hands in a sort of still fury. "Oh, if I had my husband here, I should ask him to thrash you till you couldn't stand or speak,—and he'd do it! Not love him? I love him so much more than I ever loved you, so much more than I ever knew anybody could love anybody else, that I—I cannot speak it at all. I cannot measure. Oh, there are no words for it! Love him? Why, there is no other such man in all God's world, nor ever has been! *You!* You're not fit to look at him, to wear a man's image in the same world. Do you know what he did? He

begged me to marry him, and I wouldn't. I honestly thought I was going to die. My heart had been—broken. I had no faith left in any human being. I thought I was going to die, and I hoped to die. I told him so. I told him I could never love anyone again, that I could never again be anything but a hopeless, heartless, embittered wreck—something best left alone to die by itself. And in the face of that, believing that I would never love him, he begged me, again and again and again to marry him, until I did. That's the sort of man he is. That's what a man can be, and I never knew it. Love him? Why, I—— Ah! what's the good of talking about such love as that before *you?* You never in your life loved anything but your miserable self. What should *you* know?"

Wareham stared at her under his brows.

"I don't understand," he said dully. "If you're so precious fond—if you love him like that, why don't you tell him? Why don't you let him know?"

That was a slip. That incriminated Cromwell, if the woman had not been too self-absorbed to notice—to ask how Wareham knew. She turned her head a little away, and a rush of colour came up over her cheeks. For the first time she seemed to lose mastery of the situation.

"I'm afraid," she said. "Somehow I'm—afraid. It's—it's such a big thing! What if—what if he has—stopped caring? Ah, it's such a big thing! It's all my life to me. I'm afraid."

Then at last there seemed to flicker up in Larrabee Wareham a tiny, belated spark of decency, of unselfishness, of generosity.

It seemed to be wrung from him with a little wry, bitter smile.

"I—I think I should tell him if I were you," he said gently. "I think you'll find he has not stopped caring. Yes, I should tell him if I were you." He paused a moment, looking towards her furtively, out of the corners of his eyes, and he made as though he would speak again. Then he turned and went away through the trees, not looking backwards.

Presently the shrubs near by parted, and Cromwell came out from them into the open space beside the spring. His wife stared at him, white and still.

"I—heard," he said very low. "I've been—listening. Oh, yes, it was vile of me, if you like, but I'm glad. At first it was accidental. I didn't know you were here. Then I heard you say something, and, instead of going away, I stopped and listened. I've been listening for nearly ten minutes, I should think." He raised an unsteady hand to his dry lips, and the firm hold he had been keeping upon himself seemed to break.

"Bee! Bee!" he cried. "Is it true? Oh, is it true?"

The woman came to him very slowly, crimson-cheeked—she would not meet his eyes—and she laid her face upon his breast with an odd, quick gesture, like a little child laying its head in its mother's lap, and she began to sob. Cromwell's arms went around her in a flash, so tight that she cried out in the midst of her sobbing; but it was a fierce, glad little cry, as if she were glad to be hurt.

"Is it true, Bee?" he said again, with his lips in her dark hair.

Then she put up her two hands and pulled his head down and kissed him on the mouth.

"Look at me!" she cried in a shaking whisper. "Oh! can't you see? Look at me!"

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THE CALL OF THE SANDS.

THE CALL OF THE SANDS.

BY FRANCES RIVERS.

Photographs by E. T. Sheaf, Newport, Isle of Wight.

IN that delightful book "The Golden Age," Mr. Kenneth Grahame, the poet, preaches the gospel of the importance of the trivial; and puts into words the unvoiced, if sub-conscious, knowledge which lurks in each mother's heart; showing how, to the child, its soap-bubbles are very real balloons, and how, riding in its attachment of imaginary car, the child sails through an ideal world.

Children, the wings of their souls not yet clipped, with their confident yet shy ways, their credulous yet sceptical eyes, their innocent shrewdness, their delicious literalness and equally delicious idealism, these children — the adorable egoists, who are sweet as the scent of a beanfield in full flower — can thrust their hot little hands confidently into those of the "Olympians," who, their willing slaves, thus become, by the magic of their grasp, sharers with them in their unaccountable power of insight into things invisible.

BASTIONS, EPAULMENTS.

What wonder that picturing infancy with a poet's eyes, seeing its code of good and evil, definitely fixed as day from night, with no understanding of the many subtle and insidious tones of dusk that lie between, recognising its freaks and fancies, its butterfly-like faculty of skimming over both deeps and shallows, its ecstatic joys, its desperate despairs, its easy tears of temper, its passionate repentances — what wonder that Longfellow should have written his verse?—

Come to me, oh ye children, for I hear
You at your play.
And the questions that perplexed me
Have vanished quite away—

for it is given to the poets, and to the poets only, to enter truly into the enjoyments of the young, and to become, by so doing, "as a little child."

What can the silly ordinary "Olympians," who elect to live in cities, who are so banal in their ways of passing their days, that children turn from their tastes with a sort

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AND FOR WHAT DO THEY FISH?

of cold contempt, ill repressed; whose lives are sombre and commonplace—what can these heavy Brobdingnagians know of child nature? But poets, they know, for *they* are themselves but children of a larger growth.

"Come unto these yellow sands" is a call to children, one which is audible but to young ears; and in response—

There was a rustling, of merry crowd, justling, at pitching and hustling,
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering,
And, like fowls in a farmyard where barley is scattering,
Out came all the children running:
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping; ran merrily after
The wonderful music, with shouting and laughter—

the call of the sands being now as seductive as was once, says tradition and Browning, the call of the piper of Hamlin.

Perhaps children see in the seams and cleavages of the purling, dancing, laughing waves, golden shafts which to older eyes are not perceptible; see, on the breeze-blown foam, actual sea-horses; and it is possible that to their souls imaginary sight is revealed, in place of a prosaic lapping tide, a magic scimitar flashing round the land, cutting away, with every stroke, conventions. In a child's calendar there are three important epochs, each marked with red letters: the first is its birthday; the second is Christmas-tide; the third, and this is painted in a more vivid scarlet than is either of the other

THE JOYS OF PADDLING.

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"HE PAYS LITTLE OR NO HEED TO HER BLANDISHMENTS."

two, the annual visit to the sea.

It is a proud thing to the childish mind to leave home with set purpose to see the world; to go away with a trunk, a spade, a bucket, and perhaps a doll; to get, on the journey, cross, excited, and dirty, to eat sandwiches, and to arrive, after travelling for many hours, at the hither side of — nowhere. Arrived there, to see the sun's dazzle of heat pulsating above the golden sand, and to gaze at the vast expanse called sea, which, if the child had not been told was water, it would have guessed to be spilled quicksilver.

What joy to have left behind the stale, stuffy nursery, with its metronomic swing of duties, where life of late had become so dull as to seem tarnished, and to have stepped into a world in which everything is fresh, clean-washed, and full of savour—a big, cool blue and green world, in which new perspectives of promise opened up with every advancing minute, a world, too, which revealed surprises perpetually! Surprises of time as well as of space; in which those of the first dimension were not less interesting than those of the last, in which the dreaded hour of bed was shifted forward from the arbitrary one of eight, to the limits of inclination; whilst that of uprising become equally elastic, the *réveille* being beaten on the shore by the waves rather than by the voice of nurse into the consciousness of the little sleeper.

What does it matter to the awakening child that the bedroom furniture is unostentatiously *bourgeois*, deal and dimity? The very scent of the place brings strange feelings — feelings vague, like half-caught memories, of other summers, dreamy, doubtful; and in trying to classify these he remains quiet till the song of a mounting lark, rousing him to the consciousness of where he is, attracts him to the latticed window, and he looks across the flat expanse of half-dried sand, stamped with the wavy impress of a

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"STAMPED WITH THE WAVY IMPRESS OF A RECENT TIDE."

"THE FLOCK SCATTERS LIKE A HANDFUL OF STONES FLUNG AT RANDOM INTO THE AIR."

recent tide, and in so looking wakes to the fact that the holidays have indeed begun, and to the eternal beauty of youth's eternal hope for, and faith in, happiness.

Preceding breakfast comes the dread delight of bathing. Then, while he is verily convulsed with shivering, and trembling in a very abandonment of enjoyed fear, the waves break over him, again and yet again until Assurance assumes the place from which she has succeeded in ousting Fear.

After breakfast the Janets claim again the child, and there, in company with new-made friends, he sits entranced to watch the sea-gulls which, flying low, top the crest of the waves in their quest for food, to dip and rise and dip again in rhythmic measure till, disturbed by some imaginary foe, the flock

"TO GUESS FOR WHAT BOURNE THE VESSEL FAR OUT, BUT A PIN'S POINT ON THE HORIZON, IS BOUND."

scatters across the broad expanse of sea like a handful of stones flung at random into the air. Or perhaps the boy, with heart made buoyant by the air of the place, tries to guess for what bourne the vessel far out, but a pin's point on the horizon, is bound.

Or he goes fishing.

And for what does he fish?

Not for common soles or mackerel, but for "the hogfish, the dogfish, the dolphin, the coney-fish, the parrot-fish, the shark, the poison-fish, the sword-fish, and not only other incredible fish, but for the salamander, several sorts of barnacles," and the solan geese of Izaak Walton's list; for, as this writer quaintly adds: "The waters are Nature's storehouse, in which she locks up her wonders," and this all children know.

What thoughts are in the boy's head as, later in the day, having strayed beyond bounds, he stands alone entranced by the vision of the setting sun? for are we not told that "the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts"? Perhaps, to him, there is an especial charm about the moments snatched from anticipated reprimand, for, of course, the "Olympians" ever scold when they fail to understand; and so when at last he turns

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WHAT CAN LIFE IN TOWNS OFFER IN THE WAY OF ENJOYMENT TO EQUAL THE DELIGHTS OF PADDLING?

lagging steps towards home, it is with the serenity of languor which follows enjoyed indulgence and makes the possible punishment, to be met at the drastic moment of return, worth the suffering.

With the next morning, however, a change

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"THE THOUGHTS OF YOUTH ARE LONG, LONG THOUGHTS."

comes o'er the spirit of the child—one not to be wondered at, since "the boy's will is the wind's will"; but with his uprising he sees the world in a new aspect and, banishing dreams and sentiment, is all for practicability, for though yesterday life was too serious for play, play has become to-day's obligation.

Again he hies to the sands, where, fenced by humanity, he notes a cleared space reserved for jugglers; and he elbows his way through the crowd to where, were there a rope, that rope would be; whence, entranced, he watches a performance full of charm.

As he watches the clown, thoughts of a career, as fascinating as paying, are suggested to the boy, and the true answer to "What's the true end sole and single that he's here for?" comes to him in enjoyment. Yet, when he returns home to the early dinner and propounds the notion of following this career for his own to the particular "Olympians" who have taken unto themselves the task of feeding, clothing, and housing him, he is annoyed to find with how little enthusiasm his idea is received. But, with little localised powers which make them audacious in their self-esteem, these "Olympians," who couldn't catch a coin in their mouths or balance a plate on their noses to save their lives, profess disregard for both these accomplishments, and it is an additional weak point about them that they are never open to reason, although he assures them that, as a juggler, he could not only juggle so as to win the world's applause, but so as to justify his own existence. But to him they turn an unsympathetic, if not a deaf, ear, as he asserts that this is the only profession in which he can make his mark.

Time, however, by the use of its unguents, and the pure sky, and the sunshine, and the wonderful charm of the perfumed day, restores the boy to his customary good temper, and plenishes anew his fund of hope as his mind is stretched by new sensations to larger limits.

The joys of sea and sand never pall. Halcyon days follow each other: "days that are always fair"; days in which friendships are formed—frantic, jealous, neck-gripping friendships between boy and boy, and at times, though much more rarely, between boy and girl. But girl watches boy throw up sandy semblance to shelter-trenches, earthworks, epaulments and redoubts, and becomes enamoured of his prowess, and with, in these early years, the feeling of selection abnormally developed, she unblushingly makes to him unmaidenly advance. Practical rather than poetical in her methods, she proffers bribes of chocolate or shells, disregardful of her bashful swain's rebuffs, who, more sensitive of nerve than she, feels it to be *infra dig.* to be the chosen confidant of a girl at whom, as a forward miss, he is seen, not infrequently, to frown mislikingly, or, busy with the great cares of his scientific undertaking, he pays little or no heed to her blandishments.

Photo by] [*A. J. Johnson.*

THE CALL OF THE BOATS.

But the baby girl is not to be repelled. Her three-year-old eyes tell things to the seven-year-old boy which, if expressed by older ones, would cause her to be called, at least, bold. They announce in clear language words that the baby lips could not yet lisp; they say: "I love you—yes, I do unutterably. There has not been a moment since yesterday, when I saw you for the first time, in which you have been out of my thoughts. Could you see into my heart, you would know that I am speaking but the truth. You are unique, indeed and indeed you are!" At which, "You naughty girl!" says the Grosvenor Square nurse, vaguely disturbed by, and conscious of, something in the face of her three-year-old charge of which, in a

confusion of thought, she disapproves; for how can she know that friendship is love without its exactions, or see purity illustrated by the sentiment expressed by Juliet: "They do not love who do not show their love"?

The boy — well, perhaps he has taken to heart the sense of the Latin saying he is later to learn, through a study of Plautus, to construe: "Adolescentem verecundum esse decet." And certainly he is pestered by attention, for when — the Saint Luke's summer having waned — trunks, once more packed, are being put into the luggage-van of the train which is to transport the children to prosaic life, his repellent attitude is still unchanged, though it is a girl older by five years than the siren of the sands, who makes to him advances.

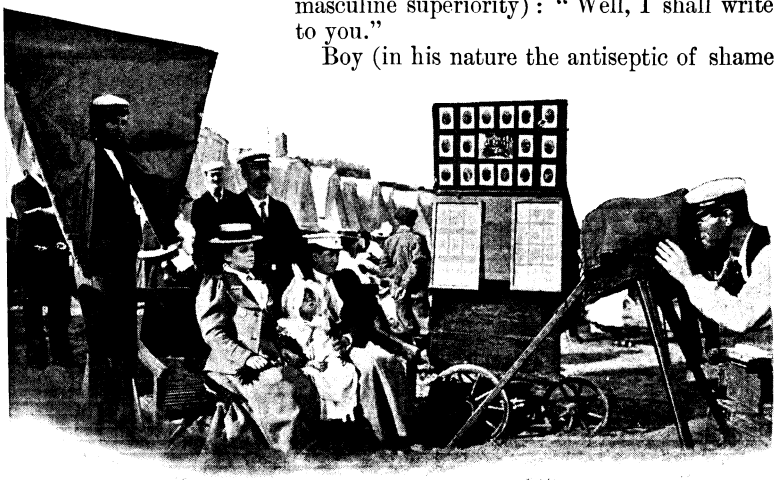

Photo by] [*A. J. Johnson.*

THE FAMILY GROUP.

Girl: "You will write to me, won't you?"

Boy: "No, I shan't."

Girl (who, rather nonplussed for a moment, has set her wits to the discomposing of this masculine superiority): "Well, I shall write to you."

Boy (in his nature the antiseptic of shame having entirely destroyed the germ courtesy): "Shan't give you my address."

For which, and other things, the daughter of Not will bring, many years hence, punishment to bear upon the boy.

Photo by] [*A. J. Johnson.*

"THIS IS THE ONLY PROFESSION IN WHICH HE CAN MAKE HIS MARK."

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THE BARGAIN-RUMMAGERS.

By DESMOND F. T. COKE.

IT seemed almost inevitable.

Ever since I had read about the place in a Daily of two years ago, I had fought the great temptation. It was almost vanquished, when in the second number of a new *Journal for Collectors*, I came upon a heading, "The Antiquary's Paradise." I protest, I tried not to read the article. I knew what I should find—the glories of the Friday curio-mart in the Metropolitan Meat Market. I was determined not to read it. But I did.

Then I told the Female Connoisseur, and my fate was fixed. "We must go," she said in grim resolve. The Female Connoisseur has a great way with her.

"We?" I echoed dully.

"You and I," was her stern answer.

I tried diplomacy. I told her that the market was a long way off—beyond King's Cross. It was no place for a woman (here she snorted). It was very dirty, very dangerous. I told her that half the mysterious disappearances in London were from the Metropolitan Meat Market.

This seemed only to rouse the spirit of romance in her. Her eyes glistened. "Oh! won't it be fascinating?"

"You must put on the very dirtiest of clothes," I said, with inspiration—dress seemed the most vulnerable point—"otherwise they'll raise their prices double."

"D'yer laike me, Alf?'"

"It'll be just like in a book!" she cried. For a married woman the F. C. is absurdly ungrammatical and youthful.

"We shall have to make an early start."

I meant this as discouragement: she took it as an added joy. "Yes, we'll creep out in our old things, with the dustman, and hansom there in no time."

A final chance presented itself. "No," I said smugly, and, I hope, convincingly, "a hansom is impossible. If we share the people's pleasures" (my voice quivered), "we must also share their limitations. We must go, as suits our clothes, upon a 'bus—on several 'buses."

"Capital!" she murmured; "I love the inside of a 'bus." (I can only live upon the top.) "Well, let's say nine o'clock, on Friday next, from here."

This seemed to clinch the matter. "Nine o'clock, on Friday next, from here," I repeated vacantly, and said "Good-bye." My stock of tact and patience was exhausted. After all, I could solve the matter by forgetting.

I had nearly managed to forget, in all sincerity, on Thursday night, when I received a letter.

. . . "I hope," it said, "your costume is ready? Mine is *quite* a triumph. I look just like 'Arriet! This is only to remind you. We *start* from here at nine a.m., wet or fine."

It was not quite closing-time for telegrams, and I dashed to the nearest post-office.

"No market if wet," I wired. Falsehood comes so easy on a telegraphic form. Then I settled down to pray for rain.

"James," I said to the butler, "I may want calling at half-past seven to-morrow, if it's fine. But, mind," I went on very impressively—I hope I didn't wink—"if there should be one drop of rain, or any sign of drops to come, I shall not want calling until nine o'clock. You understand?" It would not be my fault if James failed to wake me.

My conscience was entirely easy when James came in next morning. I merely felt a little sorry for the Female Connoisseur, alone in all her costermonger finery.

"'Alf-past seving, sir," said James.

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"Little crowds clustered round some treasure spread upon the ground."

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I leapt up. "*What*——" I began in awful anger.

"Ah, the weather?" James continued. "It's summat *like* summer, is to-day. A rare slice o' luck, sir. Not a cloud." He drew the curtain swiftly, letting in a light that hurt my eye. I trust that I said nothing.

I suddenly resolved to oversleep myself. But, somehow, I could not really sleep; and the thought of the F. C.'s disappointment came to weigh upon me. I determined to see the matter through. But one thing I would not do: I would not indulge her by putting on absurd, odd clothes, a dirty collar, and the rest. What was the use of it? She had said they would take us, then, for dealers. As though *I* could be mistaken for a dealer, or she, either! I put on an ordinary morning suit, and was at the F. C.'s house by nine o'clock.

She must have been vastly keen upon the trip, for she was ready, and opened the front door. At a first glance I took her for the servant. A mackintosh coat of a disreputable age, a stained and napless skirt of serge, a sixpenny-halfpenny bead-chain, were the first things to strike me. The F. C. curtsied.

"D'yer laike me, Alf?" she smiled.

Such playfulness so soon after breakfast struck me as close upon immoral. Looking back, perhaps I was in rather an unpleasant mood. "I didn't notice anything different," I said.

"Still she bought—bought, till I was laden."

The F. C. kept agreeable—she always does. "How like a man!" she laughed. "Not notice!"

I hate sneers at the sex. "I did notice your dress," I said, "but it's as usual. Look at the hat, now; that gives you away. No common person could ever——"

"Yes," she interrupted, pleasantly but coldly, "I borrowed it from Liz, the kitchen-maid." Then she stepped back. "Oh, but I admit *you're* better. The tie . . . the baggy knees . . . the mossy bowler . . . Oh, you're perfect!"

I said nothing. The F. C. rather annoys me, at times, when she is silly. "Now to business—and the 'bus!" she cried.

"Yes," I said, with little keenness, "I'll whistle a hansom."

"No," cried the F. C., in a stupid parody of my attempt to put her off, "we must share the people's limitations. Let us 'bus."

Of course, she was trying to annoy me. Over the journey I prefer to waste no words. It was entirely indescribable. After the second change of 'bus, I left the F. C., happily ensconced among babies, labourers, and swelling washerwomen, and rode upon the top, until the market came in view.

A bare, unimposing place—cobbles, gutters, palisades, broken here and there by little crowds clustered round some treasure spread upon the ground. A close approach made the latter's nature clear. Villainous-faced men and women lolled against the rails, staring with lack-lustre eyes at their stock-in-trade—oddments of rubbish in every possible variety. The purchasers-to-be, for the most part, displayed an equal lack of interest.

The F. C. was delighted. "What a fascinating place!" she cried. But I noticed that she kept her gloves on, and turned the fascinating treasures, cautiously, with the ferrule of her stick. The sellers lowered on her in resentment. As a dealer she did not convince. Mentally they raised their prices.

Still she bought—bought, till I was laden—bought for the mere joy of buying. The Meat Market might be "The Antiquary's Paradise," but this Friday was clearly a day off. Her purchases included nothing in the least degree heavenly, and not much that was antique. She had got a scent-bottle (to fit a silver top at home), a table-bell, a heavy frame, and I had dissuaded her from a pair of massive candelabra. (The stall-holders would not deliver purchases.)

She was just discussing an old hat, designed for use on future expeditions. Suddenly she started back.

"Good gracious! Who ever'd——?"

"What have you seen?" I murmured anxiously, and gazed at her stick's ferrule.

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"Lady Bardingham raised her lorgnette and scanned the F. C.'s costume."

But she was staring in horror down the lane of rubbish. I followed her gaze.

It was Lady Bardingham, a few yards off, sweeping along in the extreme of fashion.

"She must have read the same article," I whispered, secretly rejoicing.

Lady Bardingham raised her lorgnette and scanned the F. C.'s costume coldly. "How d'ye do, my dear?" she said languidly. "What a *queer* place! I didn't see your carriage," and she passed on.

"Cat!" hissed the F. C., if one can hiss such words. "Luckily I'm always smarter than *she* is, the old frump!"

"And lucky," I said gently, "that *I* had got my decent clothes on."

I looked up, to see if I had got my own back on the point of clothes. There was a dainty tear in the corner of the F. C.'s eye. Relenting, I grew sympathetic. Lady Bardingham was always vilely dressed, the F. C. always charming.

"I think we'll go," said the F. C. in bedraggled tones. Probably I made some pretence of resistance, but it cannot have been too convincing. My spirits rose as we approached the exit. Once past the perilous crossing, where halt horses were being frantically galloped with a view to sale, we should be clear of the vile place; and I knew that the F. C. would not drag me there again.

Suddenly she stopped. "Oh!" she cried.

"What is it?" I asked—"a further instalment of the peerage?"

"No, no!" was her dramatic whisper. "Be careful! Don't look! That article said Old Masters were quite often bought here. On that stall—oh, do be careful!—there is a Titian, I'm sure."

At last she let me look. The head was certainly dirty enough, the colours mellowed almost to obscurity. The F. C. was herself again. She attacked the man insidiously, asked the price of endless rubbish, and finally pointed with contempt at the Old Master.

"Two bob," said the dealer. He would have said the same at first.

The F. C. bore it off triumphant, hugging it face forward, hoping, I think, that some big dealer would make a noble offer for it; and suddenly someone did exclaim in surprise: "Hullo!"

We both looked up. It was Mrs. Fenton, smarter, if possible, than even Lady Bardingham.

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"Been buying?" she smiled. "How original!"

"Yes; I've got an Old Master." The F. C. bubbled with pride.

Mrs. Fenton thought that she was joking, and laughed a cool, rippling laugh. "Very old!" she said. "I always thought it so marvellous how *The Annual* could afford to do it. Quite a gem, now it's varnished!" (she laughed again). "I suppose there's nothing *good* here?" She was gone.

"She's envious!" said the F. C. "Of course it's old, isn't it? I wonder if it's signed? . . . No. . . . Well, they weren't alw—— Yes, it *is!* Look! What is it? T . . ."

Unhappily there could be no doubt. Beneath the dim-toned varnish there was still legible, in bold handwriting: *The Annual.*

Neither of us spoke it; but the F. C. silently turned the picture's face towards her. Also she took a hansom home.

In future she means to buy her curios in Bond Street. She says that it comes cheaper.

CANDLE-TIME.

I SAW them all at Candle-Time—
The Halfway Folk go creeping by:
The Mouse-Man with his nibbly Wand,
And his hat as high as high;
And the Cranny-Wife with heels tip-tap,
And bits of moonbeams in her lap.

I heard the passing Goblin-Men,
And the Witchy-Ladies white as white;
I heard those clocks, as plain as plain,
That only tick at Candle-Light:
And while I listened, peek-a-chin,
I heard the Night-time-Man turn in.

I saw Grey Gaffer with his Cart,
I saw the Big Wide Wheels go round;
And the Eerie-Wights go glinting by
Without a sign or sound;
I saw the Murk-Men with their brooms
Sweeping the shadows from the rooms.

There was a Window stiff and straight:
I peeked right through between the bars:
I saw a Prince, and Cinder-Wench,
And a Cat with eyes like stars,
Go walking round and round and round,
Till their shadows faded on the ground.

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.

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THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

A POSER!

ROMANTIC ETHEL: Oh, Mabel, why was I born to be beautiful instead of rich?

CYNICAL MABEL: Dunno! Ask me another—something easy in the fiscal line.

A CERTAIN junior counsel was cross-examining a witness named Ellen—a familiar figure in an Irish town, who was rather unwilling to divulge all she knew about the case. The K.C., assuming his most winning manner, said: "Now, Ellen, I shall be glad if you will inform the court so and so, and so and so." Ellen immediately retorted: "Don't be so familiar, Peter, until we are better acquainted!" which was "first blood" for Ellen, and fairly brought down the house. "Peter" has since attained a high position on the Irish Judicial Bench.

THE SARCASTIC ANEMONE.

Whenever cash is running low—
A frequent case, I grieve to say—
I never to the greenwood go,
But always take another way.
For underneath the greenwood tree
There lurks the pale anemone,
Which seems to think it very funny
To keep on asking: "Any money?"
Chaffing me for my want of tin.
(How rude of it to rub it in!)

A parishioner in a small village objected to an open cross in the back of the parson's chair, and complained about it, and would not be satisfied until it was explained that there had been a wooden cross there, but the churchwardens had it cut out to get rid of it.

A COMMERCIAL traveller, having made a lot of money, bought an estate somewhere in County Mayo. A tenant sent him some snipe, and invited him to come down for some shooting, but in discussing the subject with a friend, the landlord, holding up the snipe, inquired: "Do you think the man who hit those flying would be likely to miss me?"

A SHORT time ago the headmaster of a boarding-school observed one of the boys cleaning his knife on the tablecloth, and immediately pounced on him.

"Is that what you generally do at home, sir?" he asked sternly.

"Oh, no," replied the boy quietly, "we have clean knives at home."

THOMPSON: I don't know what to do to please my wife.

JOHNSON: Tried suicide, old man?

RUSTIC RESPECTABILITY.

"I THOUGHT you were to sit for Mr. Green's picture?"

"Well, miss, so I were, an' I cleaned myself an' put on my black coat an' my best hat an' went up. But when he seed me, Master Green, he carried on that awful I came away."

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THE MANAGEMENT OF CHILDREN.

How well I remember the days of my boyhood,
I don't think they wrote to the newspapers then,
To tell of the stories of infant rebellions,
Or failure to manage a terror of ten;
They'd a way that was short when the kids didn't mind 'em,
They'd only to speak, and the young urchins flew,
Or the old carpet slipper came sailing behind 'em—
That old carpet slipper my infancy knew.

PERHAPS!

AUTHOR: Yes, I lost a lot of sleep over my new novel.
KITTY: Oh, is that why Sis yawns so much when she is reading it?

IF I BUT KNEW.

"Your time will come," they tell me,
But what I'd like to know
Is where that time will come from
And where it's going to go.
If I had but this knowledge,
How happy I would be!
For then I'd run and meet it
And keep it company.

Porter Emerson Brown.

IT is related of the chairman of a certain great railway that, strolling on to the platform at six o'clock one fine summer's morning, he found a porter hard at work sweeping the platform. "Good morning," said he; "you appear to be busy early to-day." "Yes," innocently replied the porter, not knowing his questioner, "we're expecting the old man and some of the directors here to-day, and are getting things ready for 'em!"

AN Irishman dreamt he was in Rome having an interview with the Pope, who presently asked him what he would take. "Sure, Holy Father," he replied, "I'll take a drop of whisky." "Cold or hot?" "Hot, may it please your holiness"; and while the kettle was boiling, Pat awoke from his dream. "Begor'," says he, "and it's sorry I am I didn't have it cold."

The Queen of Hearts
she made some tarts
Upon a summer's day;
The King of Hearts he
tried those tarts,
And now he's laid away.

The Jack of Hearts with
anger smarts;
He orders up the tray.
"Take all those tarts,
fill up your carts,
And pave the great highway!"

AN old woman was severely reproved by her minister for bowing whenever the name of Satan was mentioned. Asked why she did so, she replied: "Well, civility costs nothing, and you never know what'll happen!"

NED: I believe there is a skeleton in Robinson's family.
TED: I know it. I saw him in bathing costume yesterday.

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A DILEMMA INDEED!

MABEL: Why, what's the matter?
ETHEL: I don't know whether to buy a golf suit for cycling, or a bicycle suit for golfing.

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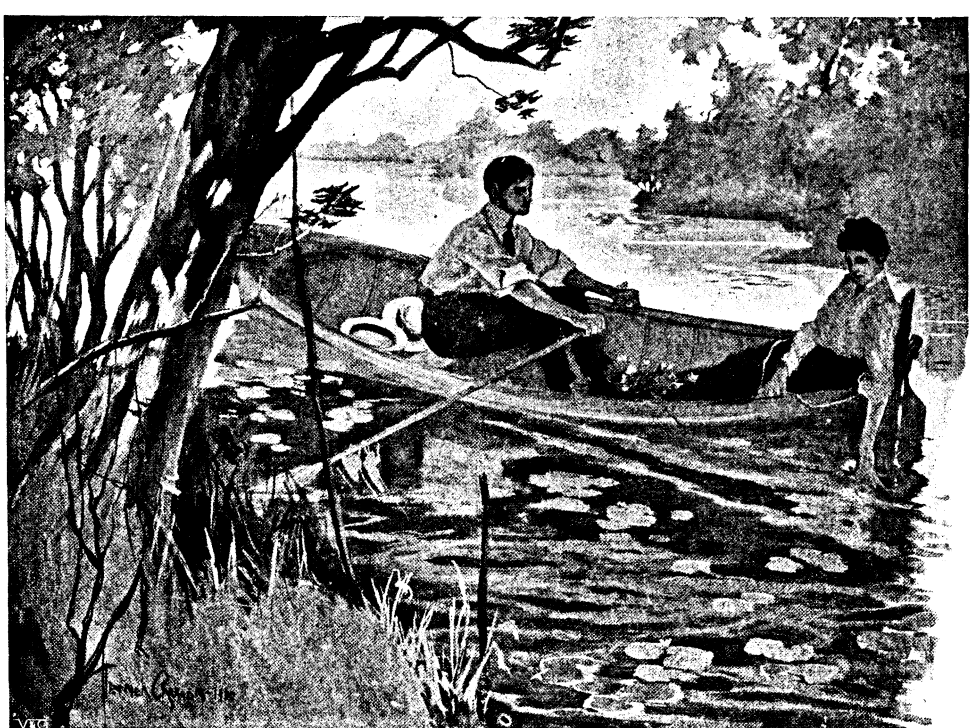
OUR NEIGHBOURS.

WE used to think our neighbours were as nice as nice could be.
Sometimes they give us chocolates and ask us in to tea.
The day we lost our parrakeet *they* seemed quite sorry, too,
And sent their cook to ask us if the dismal tale was true.
When Gladys had the whooping-cough, and we were sent away,
They used to send her grapes or books or puzzles every day;
And always every autumn, when we all come back to town,
They let us climb their walnut tree and get the walnuts down.
That day when Harold hit a four—and their glass frames as well—
And we went in together to apologise and tell,
They never said one angry word, but told us "not to mind:
"The damage didn't matter much . . ."—they really *did* seem kind!
I'm sure you would have thought so, too (their dogs are *far* too fat),
And when the cat's-meat man comes round, they buy that big black cat
Two skewers of meat a day—at least, so Dorothy believes—
And when we all kept silkworms once, we used their mulberry leaves.
And every winter, when the ice is thick enough to bear,
They let us skate upon their pond and take our sledges there.
They leave out water for the birds, and never let it freeze,
And even feed the sparrows that destroy their crocuses.
Perhaps you won't believe me, but I'm grieved to have to say
The horrid things that happened at their house the other day,
When, with a most terrific noise of mops and pails and brooms,
They *beat* their carpets and their rugs, and *turned out* all their rooms!

Rosamund Marriott Watson.



NO DOUBT OF IT!

SHE: Mamma says you have the gambler's instinct. Did you ever countenance a lottery?
HE: Yes; I was best man at my brother's wedding.

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THE BETTER LAND.

"Mother, where is that radiant shore?"

By G. Hillyard Swinstead, R.B.A.

From the original in the collection of Sir Francis Cory Wright.

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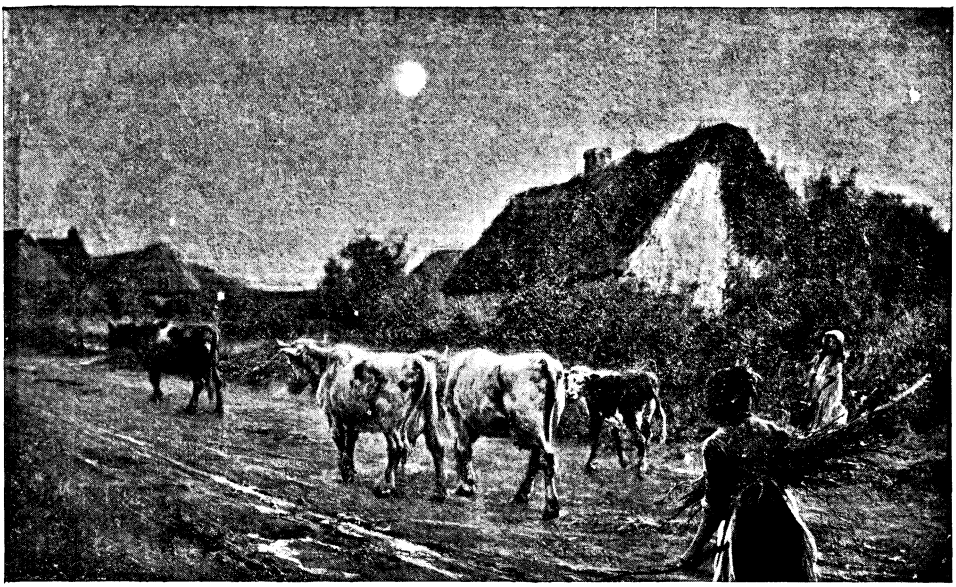

"HOME FROM THE MEADOWS." BY G. HILLYARD SWINSTEAD.
One of the Artist's two pictures hung in this year's Royal Academy.

THE ART OF MR. G. HILLYARD SWINSTEAD, R.B.A.

By B. A. CLARKE.

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THE art career of Mr. George Hillyard Swinstead began according to the best traditions of successful art careers. He came of a painting family, and was intended for commerce. Half the biographies of painters start thus. Mr. Swinstead senior was a painter of ability—an exhibitor at the Royal Academy—and among the best known of London's art teachers. It happened naturally enough, if we bear in mind the family atmosphere, that Hillyard Swinstead grew up without any commercial ambitions whatever. He preferred painting, and most of his spare time was spent in art study; and during his boyhood, from ten to sixteen years of age, when a chorister in Queen Victoria's private chapel choir at Windsor, he often wandered through the state apartments, gazing on the famous pictures in the Castle. When the time came for him to leave school, a course of home tuition and study was arranged, with a view to fitting him for a City life, in defiance of the notion then, and still, prevalent that any educational equipment will do for the City. The young Swinstead pursued his uncongenial labours in his father's studio, and when they palled, he would put them aside and copy pictures, until a well-known footfall warned him to hide his canvas and resume his studies. One afternoon Mr. Swinstead fortunately injured his foot (I really can't pretend to be sorry about an accident that gave us such pictures as "The Wanderers," "The Bridge of Time," and "The First Step") and, arriving in slippers, caught his son painting. The intelligent reader guesses the sequel, and if the man did not quite realise his part, and hail the lad as a genius, it must be remembered in extenuation that he was an art teacher. At least he saw decided promise, and resolved to put no obstacle in the path of its fulfilment, and gave every encouragement. Hillyard Swinstead gained admission, by competition, to the Royal Academy Schools, and in 1882 his first picture, "By Appointment," was hung at the Royal Academy, and he has exhibited at Burlington House almost every year since. In 1883 he exhibited "When Trumpets Call, Homes are Broken"—a horse-

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"POMONA'S BLOSSOM." BY G. HILLYARD SWINSTEAD.

A portrait picture of Eulalia, one of the Artist's daughters.

man taking farewell of his wife and daughter at the gate of an English park. The motive was not new, but it was handled with a sincerity that raised it above commonplace. It now hangs in the Sheffield Art Gallery. Mr. Swinstead's Academy picture the following year was "Oh, Merry Goes the Time when the Heart is Young!"—a large canvas showing a group of men and girls under blossom-bowed apple trees, in a landscape flooded with sunshine. This was more characteristic. Sorrows and partings scarcely exist in Mr. Swinstead's world. The year is mostly at the spring, the sun is in the heaven, and all is right with a world overflowing with adorable children and flowers and pedigree dogs. It is not that he cannot paint Nature under other aspects. He has painted many landscapes and water colour drawings (in "Saving the Harvest"—a small

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"THE ANGEL'S MESSAGE." BY G. HILLYARD SWINSTEAD.

picture recently on exhibition with others of his at Mendoza's Gallery in Bond Street—an oncoming storm—

> With ragged rims of thunder brooding low,
> And shadow-streaks of rain—

is painted with astonishing verve), but his outlook on life is that of an incurable optimist, and he paints those scenes—

> —that flash upon that inward eye
> Which is the bliss of solitude.

"FIRST ON THE ANTARCTIC CONTINENT":

MR. C. E. BORCHGREVINK, COMMANDER OF THE EXPEDITION OF 1898-1900. EQUIPPED BY SIR GEORGE NEWNES, BART.

By G. Hillyard Swinstead.

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So far, Mr. Swinstead had painted some admirable pictures, and critics had been kind to him; but the public had not really taken him to themselves. When the Academy Exhibition of 1885 closed, this could no longer be said. "The First Step" gave him a public which he has never lost, although he has refused to wear a label; his versatility in the subjects he has painted is remarkable. He has painted nothing more pleasing than this picture, although to-day he is more accomplished than he was in 1885. "The White Horse" and "Home from the Meadows," in this year's Academy, prove that. But "The First Step" was very happily inspired, and the inspiration was more pictorial than literary. Queen Victoria accepted an engraving, and expressed her admiration of the original.

To make a detailed catalogue of Mr. Swinstead's pictures would be wearisome, but attention may be directed to a few as representing different sides of his art. "The First Step" may stand for a class that includes "Don't be Jealous," "As Clean as a New Pin," "Puppy's Poppy," "Rats, Toby!" and other popular successes. "Mother, Where is that Better Land?" is full of sentiment, and is painted under the mystery of lamplight in sympathy with the subject; and deeper things are touched in "The First-Born." There is a class of critics that waxes wroth when men of original gifts handle themes like these; but the world does hold

MR. G. HILLYARD SWINSTEAD AT WORK UPON HIS PICTURE, "THE WANDERERS."

babes; they do play with kittens and wise, gentle dogs; and it is hard to say why a man who really knows and loves these should not paint them, or why, if his observation be genuine, such pictures should rank, from the standpoint of pure art, below landscapes and portraits—"presented by the members of the Blankshire Hunt." The critic's mistake often arises from the notion that popular art necessarily involves a sacrifice of art to popularity; that (to take but one instance) many worthless pictures of the "Kiss Mamma!" school have met with more success than they deserve. But surely such an elemental motive as mother-

"PAT": THE FAVOURITE DOG OF H. J. W. HILL, ESQ. BY G. HILLYARD SWINSTEAD.

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hood can never become stale or rendered unfit for treatment by the highest genius.

A word about Mr. Swinstead's animals. His dogs are first-rate. The collie pup in "The First Step" could not be bettered, nor could the fox-terrier in "Rats, Toby!" nor the red Irish setter of pictures innumerable. Mr. Swinstead's red Irish dog is surely immortal. The writer saw the artist the other day with a vivacious red setter, which, if not the same red dog that accompanied him in and out of the studio in the early 'eighties, must be its ghost.

But one of his best pieces of animal painting is of a dog, necessarily strange to him—Zembla—belonging to the explorer Borchgrevink. If the reader saw the Academy Exhibition of 1901, he will remember "First on the Antarctic Continent." The dog Zembla is in the foreground, looking up at the explorer appealingly; and Borchgrevink, a dreamer, as great men of action have ever been, looks out on a world of snow with

"SPRING." A PORTRAIT PICTURE OF MISS READ. BY G. HILLYARD SWINSTEAD.

"POPPYLAND." A PORTRAIT PICTURE OF MISS ERICA JAMES. BY G. HILLYARD SWINSTEAD.

unseeing eyes. The artist painted this huge canvas on the return of Mr. Borchgrevink from the Antarctic, and the hero and his dogs sat to him.

Mr. Swinstead has the merit that he paints dogs as dogs, and never as human beings on four legs. Landseer fell into this mistake in "Diogenes and Alexander," and in some other pictures; and, in consequence, critics to-day are not quite sure about Landseer. It is rather curious that this trick, outgrown in art, should flourish in contemporary literature. Mr. Kipling gives us talking horses and equine social democrats, and a school of writers, who claim in all seriousness to be able to read the minds of wild animals, find them remarkably like their own. Many charming stories are being written on these lines, and Landseer's pictures are not destitute of charm. "Uncle Tom and his Wife Sold into Captivity" (I forget the precise title of the picture—it is in the Wallace collection) is a delight, however much we may regret the method.

Closely allied to his domestic pieces are

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"BLOSSOMS": A PORTRAIT PICTURE OF MRS. PERCY BROOKE.

By G. Hillyard Swinstead.

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"ALL SQUARE AND ONE TO PLAY: A SCENE IN THE EARLY DAYS OF GOLF."

From the picture in the collection of J. S. Williamson, Esq.

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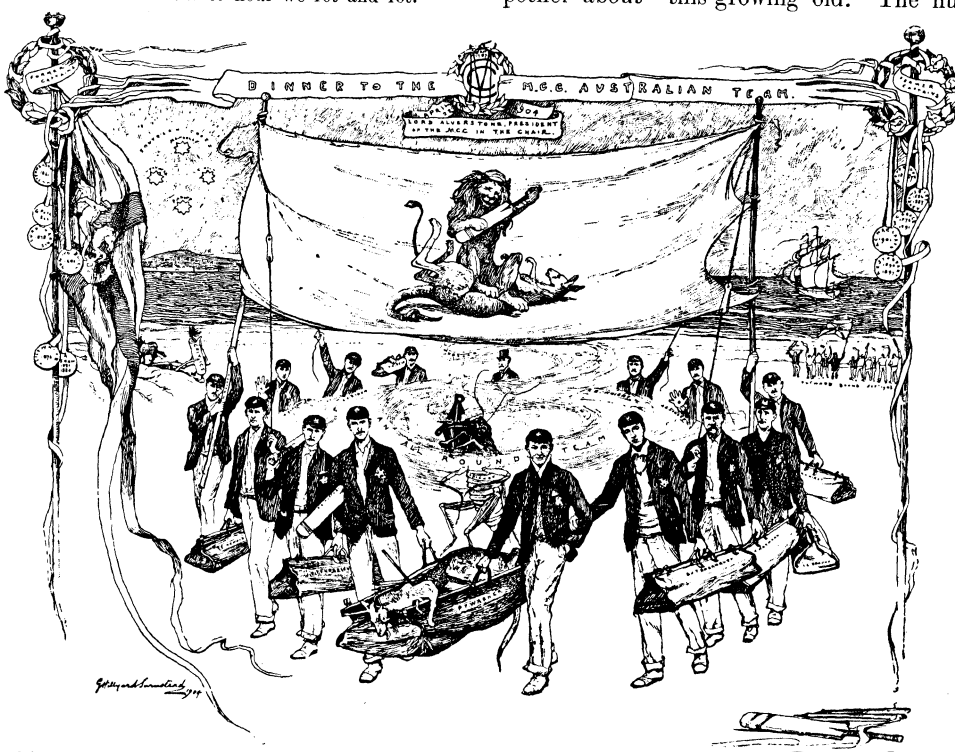
Mr. Hillyard Swinstead's portraits, of which there are many, some among his happiest efforts. Even the Academy visitor, who proclaims that he dislikes all portraits, announcing this limitation of taste as if it were a distinction, would make an exception for many of these, unless, like Molière's hero, who had been speaking prose all his life without knowing it, he has been admiring them year after year without suspecting that they are portraits. The attitude of "I can't stand portraits, don't you know," is such an intelligent and artistic one that it would be a loss indeed were it to be abandoned ; and the only safe rule is not to look at any subject pictures by Mr. Swinstead that have but one figure, otherwise, at any time, you may find yourself delighting in a portrait. Very good examples are portraits of Miss Read, Dorothy Sherlock, Erica James, Mrs. Percy Brooke. "The Bridge of Time" is a different and, some would say, a higher achievement. The picture shows an old stone bridge, and rustic figures typifying the ages of man. A stone sundial points, like the dial that Jacques drew, an obvious moral—

And so from hour to hour we ripe and ripe,
And then from hour to hour we rot and rot.

A HAMPSTEAD CRICKET CLUB MENU DESIGNED BY G. HILLYARD SWINSTEAD.

But you feel that it is not a thing to make a pother about—this growing old. The hues



MENU-COVER FOR THE DINNER TO THE M.C.C. AUSTRALIAN TEAM, DESIGNED BY G. HILLYARD SWINSTEAD.
Reproduced by permission of the M.C.C.

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"THE FIRST STEP." BY G. HILLYARD SWINSTEAD.

From the collection of C. C. Paine, Esq. Reproduced by arrangement with Messrs. Colnaghi and Company, Pall Mall East, publishers of the engraving.

of sunset are as beautiful as those of dawn. The serenity and poetic feeling of this picture are remarkable.

A few years ago Mr. Swinstead spent three months in Egypt. Two of the pictures painted there are reproduced in this number. One, "The Road from Giza to Cairo," explains itself; the other, "The Sailors' Song on a Nile Dahabeah," represents, the artist tells us, a scene common upon the Nile boats. The sailors, a medley of ancient races, sit in a ring around a charcoal fire. The singers' weird rhythms, and the hasheesh pipe which each whiffs in turn,

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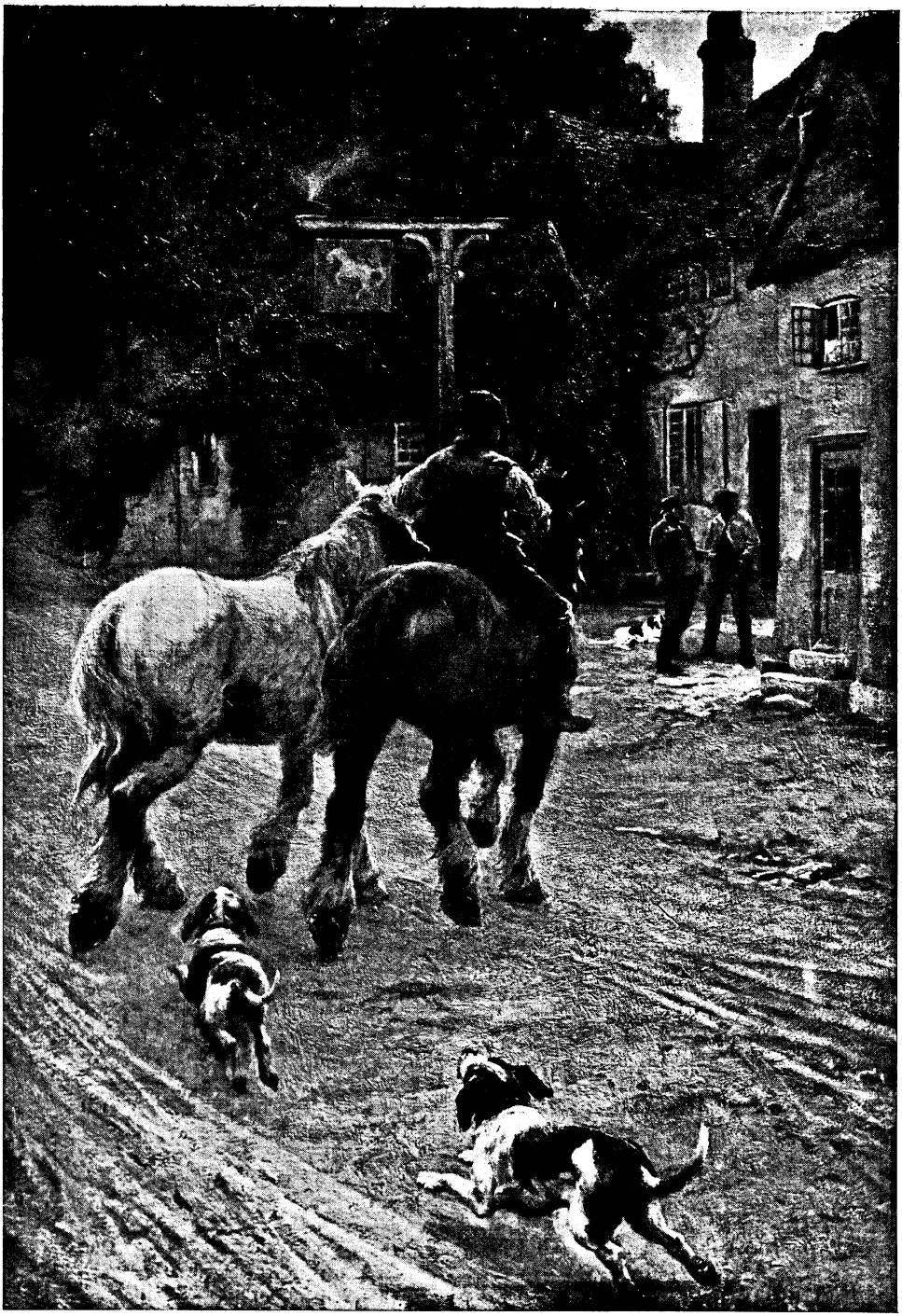

"THE WHITE HORSE, SHERE." BY G. HILLYARD SWINSTEAD.

Hung on the line in this year's Royal Academy.

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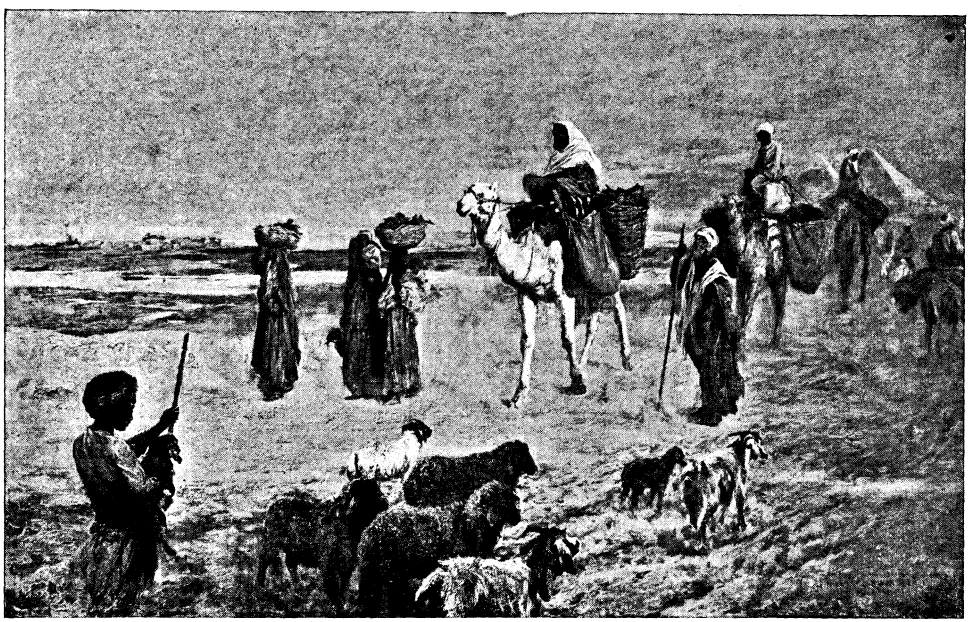
act as a narcotic, and the influence overcomes them.

A picture that stands by itself is "All Square and One to Play: the Early Days of Golf." The criticism of this may be left to practical golfers, but it is that rare thing, a correct picture of a game, as the artist, when he can find time, is a keen player, handicapped somewhere near scratch in various North London clubs.

A better-known incursion into the world of sport, although of slighter artistic importance, is his M.C.C. menu-cover, the original drawing of which is at "Lord's." The occasion was the dinner given to Warner's eleven on their English elevens in Australia. In a congratulatory letter to the artist, that industrious cricketer Mr. J. M. Barrie said that this was the most ingenious thing of the sort he had ever seen.

Another of Mr. Swinstead's menus is given—one drawn for a Hampstead cricket club dinner. F. R. Spofforth, still a most deadly bowler, and a fellow-member with the artist of the Hampstead cricket eleven, is the subject. The background shows a tent crowded with his victims.

No article upon Mr. Swinstead would be acceptable to the British public that ignored his cricket performances, although the error



"THE ROAD FROM GÎZA TO CAIRO." BY G. HILLYARD SWINSTEAD.
From the original in the collection of Frederick Sherlock, Esq.

return from Australia. In the foreground Warner and R. E. Foster carry the slain kangaroo in a cricket-bag. Immediately behind them are the other members of the side advancing in a circular formation—natural to an all-round team. In the middle of the ring is a cricket with a brazier containing the smoking ashes. Hirst and Rhodes support a bowling-screen as "a banner with a strange device"—a lion seated upon a prostrate kangaroo, and playing upon a cricket-bat. In the right-hand distance the team are leaving England on their quest perilous, and in the left are the stars of the Southern sky — Trumper, Hill, Noble, and Duff. Medallions suspended from the border of the picture bear the names of captains of previous

must be avoided of conveying an impression that he is a man of divided aims. He is a painter first, and a cricketer only so far as is helpful to his calling. He believes that a certain amount of hard exercise is necessary to keep him fit (and painting makes demand upon physical fitness), and he finds it in cricket. He loves the game, of course (he is a member of the M.C.C., Artists' C.C., and the Hampstead C.C.), but were he not convinced that it helps him as an artist, he would not give to it the painting hours of a single summer day. As it is, he often gets two hours' painting done before a match, and as many after it. Is there another case of a man, able to choose his own times, after batting or bowling for hours in the sun, concentrating

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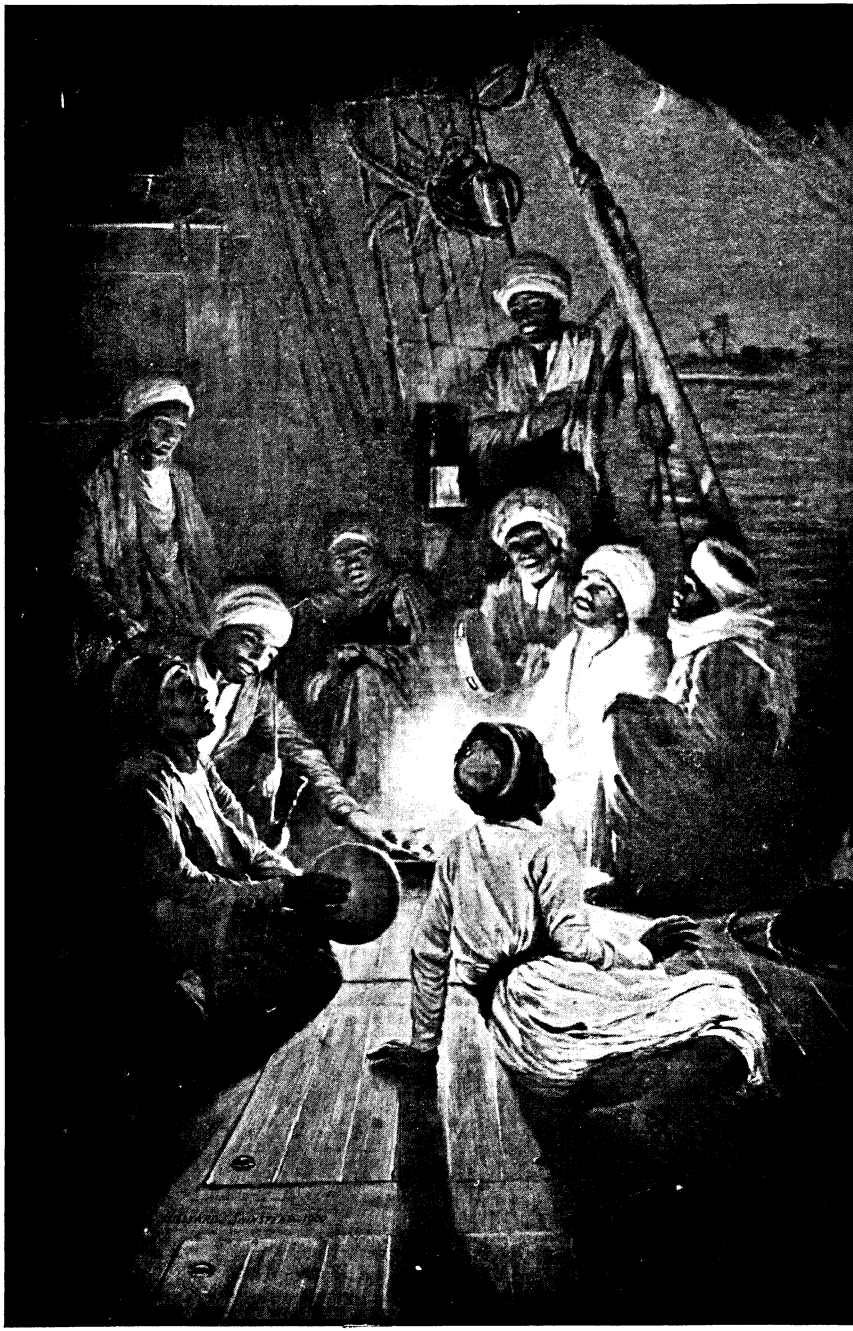

"THE SAILORS' SONG ON A NILE DAHABEAH." BY G. HILLYARD SWINSTEAD.
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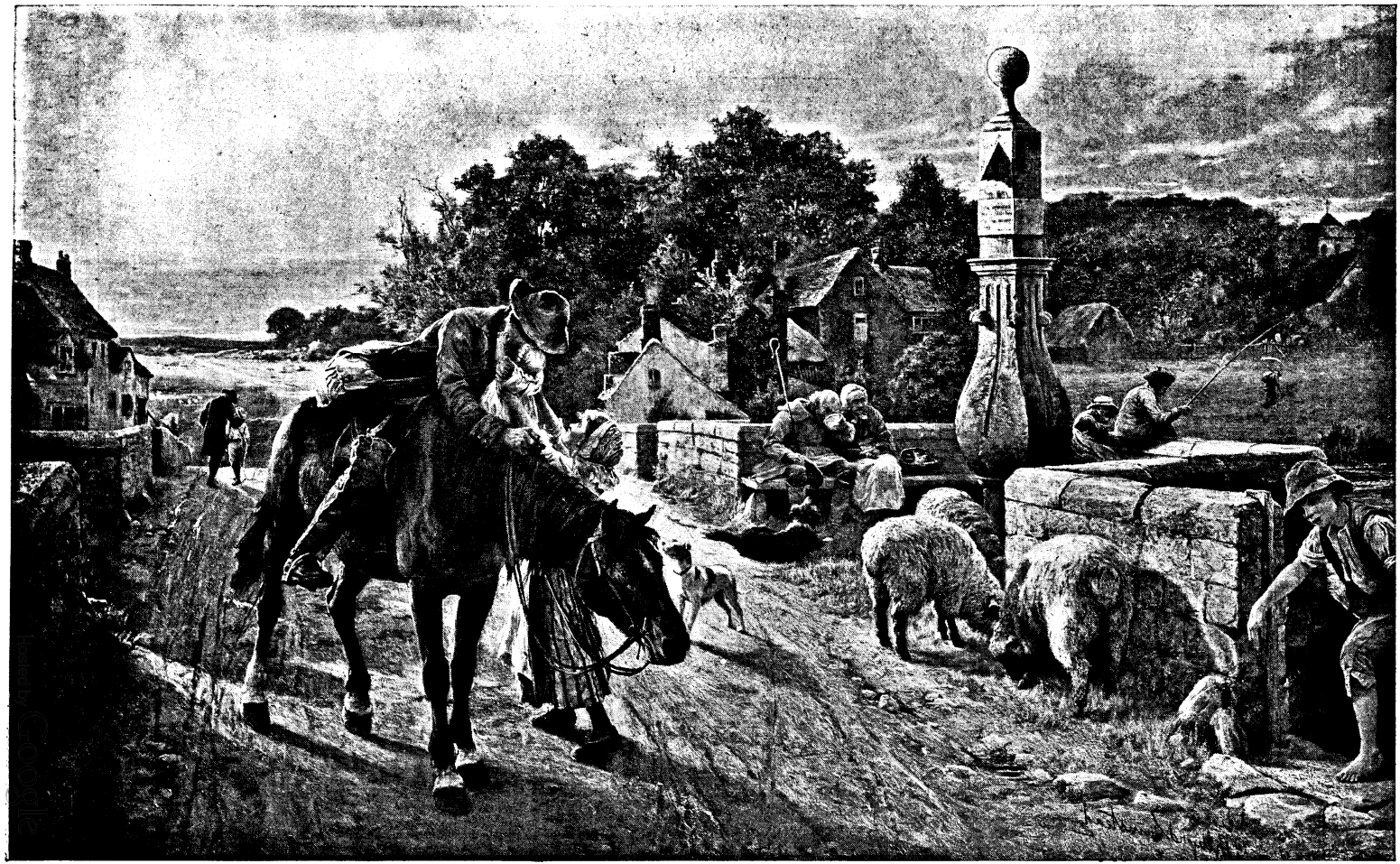
upon original work? Technically he is not a first-class cricketer, never having played in first-class matches, but in second-class cricket he has been a more potent personality than half of those who have. Two of his feats stand out. For the Artists' Cricket Club, against Mr. J. M. Barrie's eleven, in 1899, he made 106—the others of his side contributing



"ACROSS THE BRIDGE OF TIME." BY G. HILLYARD SWINSTEAD.

From the picture in the collection of W. Iliffe, Esq., F.R.C.S.

but 21, 6 being the second score, and this against the fast bowling of Mr. Hesketh Pritchard. Going into the field, he took eight wickets. The other was performed when he was playing with the Hornsey Cricket Club, whose batting averages he headed for several years. He went in against St. Bartholomew's Hospital to get 233 runs in one hour and thirty-seven minutes. With the last over called, and only two balls to be bowled, twelve runs were still wanted. Mr. Swinstead drove both out of the ground, and walked back to the pavilion with 130 to his name.

As a bowler he has a slow off-break as far removed from his fast ball as his "First Step" is from the strenuous "First on the Antarctic Continent." His batting methods are his own, and generally very entertaining. The writer heard him explain them to a horrified purist, who fancied that there might be some method in the artist's fine madness, and "wanted to know—you know."

"I like to hit the first ball of an over," said the artist, "as far as ever I can."

"Yes, yes?"

"And then I try to drive the second further."

This may stand for the painter also. He tries to hit the next ball further. As he is yet a young man, exactly how far he will be able to drive is a speculation of great interest.

"MOTHER'S DARLING." BY G. HILLYARD SWINSTEAD.
From the original in the collection of Thomas A. Brown, Esq., Winchester.

This year's Academy shows the ball driven yards beyond the previous mark. He has two pictures—"The White Horse," well hung on the line, and "Home from the Meadows." Both are reproduced here, and therefore there is no need to describe them. Of the two, "Home from the Meadows" loses more in black-and-white. Mr. G. Hillyard Swinstead has his artistic house and studio in Kidderpore Avenue, Hampstead, where most of his more recent pictures have been painted.

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LOVE'S LOGIC.

By ANTHONY HOPE.*

The Scene is a hall or corridor, lying between two conservatories, one on the right, the other on the left. Besides plants and other ornaments the corridor is furnished with a couch and a small round table with an armchair by it. The time is between eleven and twelve in the evening.

Mr. Marchesson's back is visible in the doorway leading to the conservatory on the right.

R. M. — (*Speaking to unseen person in the conservatory.*) So awfully sorry, but I absolutely promised to meet a man at the club. (*Pause.*) Beg pardon? Oh, a fellow named Smith — you don't know him. (*Pause.*) Yes, I hope we shall meet soon, but I'm rather afraid I may have to go out of town. (*Pause.*) Good night. (*Backs a little further into the corridor.*) Phew!

Miss Grainger's back appears in the doorway leading to the conservatory on the left.

Miss G.—(*Speaking to unseen person in the conservatory.*) Yes, of course we shall be friends. What? (*Pause.*) Oh, yes, *great* friends. What? (*Pause.*) I don't know—I may be going out of town. Good night. (*She backs into the corridor, throws her eyes upwards, and draws in her breath with a long sigh.*)

Mr. M. meanwhile has taken out a cigarette, and is just about to light it when they turn and see one another. Both start, smile, and then become grave and rather formal in manner.

Mr. M.—(*Putting his hands—with the cigarette and the matchbox—behind him.*) Oh, I beg pardon! I didn't think anybody—(*He turns as if to retreat into the conservatory.*)

Miss G.—Please don't go,—and please do smoke. It's so nice and cool here, isn't it? (*She sits down on the couch and fans herself gently.*)

Mr. M.—May I really? (*He comes forward a little, holding up his cigarette.*) You're sure you don't mind?

(*She nods. He lights the cigarette.*)

Miss G.—It's so warm in that conservatory. (*Pointing to the left.*)

Mr. M.—(*With feeling.*) So it was in that one. (*Pointing to the right. He wipes his brow, she fans herself assiduously.*) Ouf!

Miss G.—You *do* look rather—flustered.

Mr. M.—Well—in fact—so do you.

(*They look at one another, trying to remain grave, but presently both give a short embarrassed laugh. Mr. M. comes a step nearer, placing his hand on the back of the chair.*)

I've got it! I know the signs!

(*She looks at him inquiringly and with amusement. He nods towards the conservatory on the left.*) You've been refusing some fellow in there.

Miss G.—Have I? (*Pointing to the conservatory on the right.*) And what have you been doing in there?

Mr. M.—(*After a careful glance over his shoulder.*) As you didn't see the lady, I don't mind admitting that I've been doing the same thing.

Miss G.—(*Raising her brows.*) Refusing?

Mr. M.—Refusing—to ask.

Miss G.—Oh!

Mr. M.—(*He smokes vigorously, then throws his cigarette into a receptacle.*) It's a precious lot easier for you than for us, though. I say, I must sound like a conceited idiot, I know, but—well, you see, the fact is—

Miss G.—That you're Mr. Marchesson—?

Mr. M.—(*Pleased.*) You know my name?

Miss G.—Oh, yes. Mine's Grainger.

Mr. M.—Yes, I—I know your name, Miss Grainger.

Miss G.—You're diamonds? (*She touches some that she is wearing as she speaks.*)

(*He nods gloomily.*)

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"'Please don't go.'"

I'm soap. (*He glances for a brief instant at his hand.*) So, of course——! (*She shrugs her shoulders and closes her fan. A moment's pause.*)

Mr. M.—Beastly, isn't it?

Miss G.—Well, it's—monotonous.

Mr. M.—It's worse than that. It's degrading, it's heart-breaking, it's ruin to the character. It saps my faith in humanity, it trammels my actions, it confines my affections, it cuts me off from friendship, from the pleasant and innocent companionships which my nature longs for. I alone mayn't look with the eye of honest admiration on a pretty girl, I alone mayn't——

Miss G.—Sit in a conservatory?

Mr. M.—(*With a shudder.*) Above all—not that! I tell you it's kept me single for years! And you for——

Miss G.—Years?

Mr. M.—(*Smiling.*) Months! All last season and most of this! Take your case now——

Miss G.—(*Eagerly leaning forward.*) Oh, yes, let's!

Mr. M.—You'd naturally enjoy men's society, you'd like their friendship, their company, their admiration. You'd enjoy an innocent but piquant flirtation.

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Miss G.—Should I ?

Mr. M.—(*Looking at her.*) Well, yes, I think you would. You daren't venture on it !

Miss G.—It is generally fatal, I admit.

Mr. M.—The plain truth is that the thing's intolerable. I shall stick a placard on my waistcoat—"Not for sale."

Miss G.—And I'd better become a hospital nurse !

"'On the wrappings of the soap.'"

Mr. M.—That's rather an odd remedy, Miss Grainger. But in some form or other celibacy—public and avowed celibacy—is our only chance. (*He throws himself down in the chair.*)

Miss G.—(*Low.*) Unless there was somebody who——

Mr. M.—Didn't know who you were ? Not to be done in these days, with the illustrated press ! And—you'll excuse my referring to it ?—but your fond father put *you* on the wrappings of the soap. And owing to the large sale of the article——

Miss G.—Yes, I know. But I meant—if there was somebody who didn't—didn't care about the money ?

Mr. M.—(*Half under his breath.*) *Said* he didn't !

Miss G.—And who—who really did care just for—for one's self alone ? Oh, I must sound romantic and absurd ; but you—you know what I mean, Mr. Marchesson ? There *are* such men, aren't there ?

Mr. M.—Well, admitting there was one—and it's a handsome admission, which I limit entirely to the male sex—in the first place you wouldn't believe in him half the time, and in the second he wouldn't believe in himself half the time, and in the third none of your friends would believe in him any of the time.

Miss G.—That would be horrid—especially the friends, I mean.

Mr. M.—Female friends !

Miss G.—Of course.

Mr. M.—Another disgusting aspect of the business ! Do you—do I—ever get legitimate credit for our personal attractions ? Never ! Never !

Miss G.—(*With conviction.*) That's awfully true.

Mr. M.—So even your paragon, if you found him, wouldn't meet the case. And as for *my* paragon, nobody but Diogenes would take on the job of finding her.

Miss G.—(*Musing.*) Is *nobody* indifferent to money ?

Mr. M.—Only if they've got more than they want. (*He gives a glance at her, unperceived by her, rises, puts his hands in his*

"'I don't think it's a good joke.

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pockets, and looks at her.) Only the unhappy rich.

Miss G.—(*Roused from abstraction.*) I beg pardon, what ?

Mr. M.—Imagine a man surfeited, cloyed, smothered in it ; a man who has to pay six other men to look after it ; a man who can't live because of the income-tax, and daren't die because of the death-duties ; a man overwhelmed with houses he can't live in, yachts he can't sail, horses he can't ride ; a man in whom the milk of human kindness is soured by impostors, and for whom even "deserving cases" have lost their charm ; a man who's been round the d——d world—I beg your pardon, really I beg your pardon—who's been round the wretched world twice, and shot every beast on it at least once ; who is sick of playing, and daren't work for fear of making a profit——

Miss G.—It almost sounds as if you were describing yourself.

Mr. M.—Oh, no, no ! No ! At least—er—if at all, quite accidentally. I'll describe *you* now, if you like.

Miss G.—I get absolutely no thrill out of a new frock !

Mr. M.—There it is—in a nutshell, by Jingo ! Miss Grainger, we have found the people we want, the people who are indifferent to money, and would—that is, might—marry us for love alone.

Miss G.—(*Laughing.*) You mean—one another ? That's really rather an amusing end to our philosophizing, isn't it ? (*She rises, laughing still, and holds out her hand.*) Good night.

Mr. M.—(*Indignantly.*) Good night be—— ! Why, our talk's just got to the most interesting point !

Miss G.—Well, you ought to know—you've been doing most of it yourself.

Mr. M.—Oh, but don't go ! I—I'll do it better—and perhaps quicker too—if you'll stay a bit.

Miss G.—(*Sitting again, with a laugh.*) I'll give you just five minutes to wind up the argument.

Mr. M.—The conclusion's obvious in logic. I ought to offer you my hand in marriage, and you ought to accept.

Miss G.—(*Laughing.*) Logic is logic, of course, Mr. Marchesson—but we've never even been introduced ! I don't think you need feel absolutely compelled to go through the ceremony you suggest. We'll be illogical, and say good night.

Mr. M.—You admit the logic ? You see the force of it ?

Miss G.—Women don't act by logic, though.

Mr. M.—It's always at least a good excuse.

Miss G.—If you want one, yes. (*She is about to rise again.*)

Mr. M.—I do want one.

(*She shakes her head, laughing.*)

I'm serious.

Miss G.—You don't really want me to think that ? The very first time we meet ? The lady in there (*pointing to the conservatory on the right*) must have frightened you terribly indeed !

Mr. M.—Until the logic of the thing struck me—which happened only to-night—I thought it no good to try to know you.

Miss G.—I don't suppose you ever thought about it at all.

Mr. M.—I had nothing to give you—and you had nothing to give me ! So it seemed in the days of illogicality. Now it's all different. So I insist on—the ceremony.

Miss G.—(*Laughing, but a little agitated.*) Go on, then. But your logic doesn't bind me, you know.

(*He comes and sits on the couch by her.*)

Yes, that's quite right—but don't put too much feeling into it. It—it's only logic ! No, I—I don't think I want you to go on. I—I don't think it's a good joke.

Mr. M.—It's not a joke. I've never been introduced to you, you say. I've never spoken to you before to-night, I know. But you're not a stranger to me. There have been very few days in the last three months when I haven't managed to see you——

Miss G.—(*Low.*) Managed to see me—*managed ?*

Mr. M.—Yes—though I must say you go to some places which but for your presence would be very dull. I stuck at none of them, Miss Grainger. I swallowed every one ! Did you ever notice me ?

Miss G.—Of course not.

(*He looks at her.*)

Of course I've *seen* you, but I never *noticed* you.

(*He continues to look at her.*)

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"'Take me to my carriage.'"

Not specially, at any rate.

Mr. M.—I suppose I must have been there a hundred times. How often did you notice me?

Miss G.—How absurd! I'm sure I don't remember. Very seldom.

Mr. M.—Don't you remember even the first time?

Miss G.—Oh yes, that was at the—No, certainly I don't.

Mr. M.—Yes, it *was* at the Phillips'!

(*She smiles against her will. He also smiles.*)

I'm glad you remember.

Miss G.—You stared so—as *you* may perhaps remember.

Mr. M.—Have I stared every time?

Miss G.—Very often anyhow.

Mr. M.—You noticed that?

Miss G.—Every time I noticed you, I noticed that.

Mr. M.—And you noticed that very often! Therefore you noticed me——

Miss G.—Please, no more logic!

Mr. M.—And yet you try to treat me as a stranger!

Miss G.—It is rather a matter of *trying* with you, isn't it? You're not very susceptible to the treatment.

Mr. M.—And pretend to be surprised at my wanting to marry you! If the logic of it still leaves you doubtful——

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Miss G.—Doubtful! I never said I was doubtful!

Mr. M.—Look at the romantic side! How romantic it would be to throw yourself away on riches! Did you never think about that? Not when I—stared?

Miss G.—I didn't exactly mean that you exactly stared. You—you—you—Oh, you really might help me out! What did you do?

Mr. M.—I'd so much rather hear you say it.

Miss G.—Well, right from the beginning there was something in your look—I mean the way you looked at me—I can't describe it, but it got more and more like that.

Mr. M.—Yes, I believe I meant it to.

Miss G.—Never forward or—or impertinent. Just nice, Mr. Marchesson.

Mr. M.—I say, was that a good chap you refused in there (*indicating the conservatory to the left*) a thousand years ago?

Miss G.—Very—so handsome! I liked him awfully. And the girl you refused——

Mr. M.—To ask——

Miss G.—In there? (*Indicating the conservatory to the right.*)

Mr. M.—Really, you know—impartially speaking—a ripper! Why did we?

Miss G.—What?

Mr. M.—I said, "Why did we?"

Miss G.—Was it—a thousand years ago? Yes?

Mr. M.—Which certainly makes it absurd to call us strangers.

Miss G.—I wasn't thinking any more about that. Oh, you do——?

Mr. M.—I do—mean it.

Miss G.—(*Rising.*) I think that—after all—it wouldn't be so bad in—in——

Mr. M.—The conservatory?

(*They look at one another and laugh.*)

Miss G.—It's terribly absurd even to think about it.

Mr. M.—It's absolutely logical! And, by the way, it's time I put my question.

Miss G.—Haven't you?

Mr. M.—Then it's time you gave your answer.

Miss G.—(*Putting her hands in his.*) Haven't I?

Mr. M.—There'll be a great deal of talk about this to-morrow. (*He offers her his arm, and they go towards the conservatory on the left.*) Oh, your conservatory? No!

Miss G.—Yours would be just as bad.

Mr. M.—Then stay here.

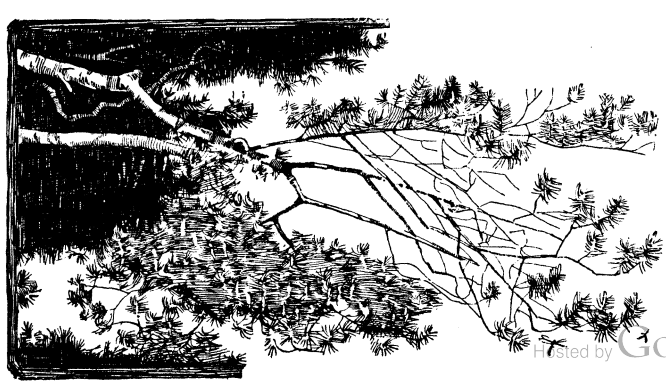
Miss G.—Take me to my carriage. And—and come and see if I'm not perfectly logical to-morrow.

(*He releases her arm and kisses her hand. She adds in a low voice:*) And—somehow—it *is* absurd—so wonderfully happy to-night! Will you come with me?

Mr. M.—Will I live? Come! Quick—through your conservatory! (*He puts his arm round her waist.*) Come!

(*They disappear into the conservatory on the left.*)

CURTAIN.



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THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE GERMAN EMPEROR.

BY POULTNEY BIGELOW.*

IN the spring of 1870, the Hon. John Bigelow, who had represented the United States at the Court of the Third Napoleon, took his family to Germany in order to fit his eldest son, John, for West Point, and his younger one, the author of this article, for Yale. During the Franco-German war, Poultney Bigelow lived with his tutor, Professor Schillbach, at Potsdam, and by reason of his father's personal relations with the late Emperor Frederick was frequently invited to spend the holidays with the young Prince who is now William II.

THE human side is not always the outside of our heroes, and the War Lord of Germany has given his confidence, his inner side, to but few. He came to the throne in 1888, barely thirty years old, and was greeted on every side as an ambitious young maniac, unfeeling towards his parents, a tyrant in his own family, and thirsting for military glory.

This view of him was pretty generally emphasised even in England, where "Society" now wonders how it could have been so misinformed about a personage so near to it as the grandson of Queen Victoria. In Paris, monstrous stories about him were manufactured, and greedily devoured throughout the world—stories which purported to be anecdotes of this alleged Imperial lunatic: how he preached sermons at midnight, knocked down with his fist the sailors on his yacht, punished officers by inviting them to commit suicide, and harangued his recruits like a Salvation lassie.

Photo by [*Meycke, Berlin.*

THE KAISER, AT THE AGE OF TEN, AS AN OFFICER OF THE FIRST REGIMENT OF FOOT GUARDS.

In few rulers does heredity manifest itself to a more striking extent. His mother, the eldest child of Queen Victoria, had in her that monumental self-reliance which in George III. provoked a revolution in America. This strong-minded woman, who became the Empress Frederick, could be distinguished as far as she could be seen in a Berlin crowd by her bonnets, which were invariably of ultra-English pattern and strikingly un-German, even to my unsophisticated, boyish eyes.

When she married the German Crown Prince, she declined to make concession to the national prejudices of the people over whom he was one day to rule as Emperor; she regarded herself as the Princess Royal of England to the day of her death; she organised her nursery and the rest of her household on English principles, and selected her social acquaintances with scant reference to the etiquette of her husband's Court. An American like Countess Waldersee might have done the same thing, yet with so much tact as to have disarmed hostile criticism. But the blood of George III. was too strong to admit of any compromise, and thus, with talents vastly above the average, and in spite of a social circle composed of the leading poets, painters, scholars, and publicists of Germany, she

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Photo by] [*Schaʿgans, Bonn.*

THE KAISER AS A STUDENT AT BONN.

remained isolated so far as public sentiment was concerned.

William II. loved his mother dearly as a child. One day during the Franco-German war, we escaped from the anxious guardianship of the tutor, Dr. Hingpeter, and set off like prowling Indians to explore the vast spaces in the sombre lofts of the so-called "Neues Palais." Frederick the Great had reared this vast edifice by way of *braggadocio* at the close of that extraordinary international war of "seven years" which, amongst other surprises, drove the French out of Canada and established George Washington to save General Braddock's little army of British regulars from destruction in the backwoods of Virginia.

We climbed together over what seemed to me acre upon acre of attic spaces illuminated by huge port-holes or bull's-eyes suggesting the side of a mammoth man-o'-war.

At last we descended into the wings of a great theatre and played hide-and-seek amidst the scenery that had once upon a time figured as the setting for no less an actor than Voltaire. It gives one an idea of this vast palace to find that a fully equipped theatre made no more trespass upon its space than a bicycle-room upon an ordinary residence. Nothing in the way of palaces has impressed me more than this one, with the exception of the Escurial, where a noble cathedral is tucked away in one corner, apparently without crowding the other public institutions under the same roof.

When we had exhausted our dramatic energies and tested the trapdoor to see if there was a goblin beneath it, we crept away and discovered a door that invited a romantic digression. It led us to a species of lumber-room where were an easel and all the paraphernalia of a painter's workshop. The prince's mother was away, so at our leisure he showed me the successive pictures of which she was the author; and a goodly number there were, some hung, but more still standing unframed about the borders of the floor leaning against the walls. The proud son dilated upon their merits with an enthusiasm which left no doubt in my mind that he ranked his mother with Rosa Bonheur. It was obviously love for the parent which tinged his admiration for her art. Had her works been done by Raphael, they could not have called forth more glowing tributes.

Photo by] [*Hanfstaengl, Munich.*

THE KAISER WITH A BEARD—IN 1891.

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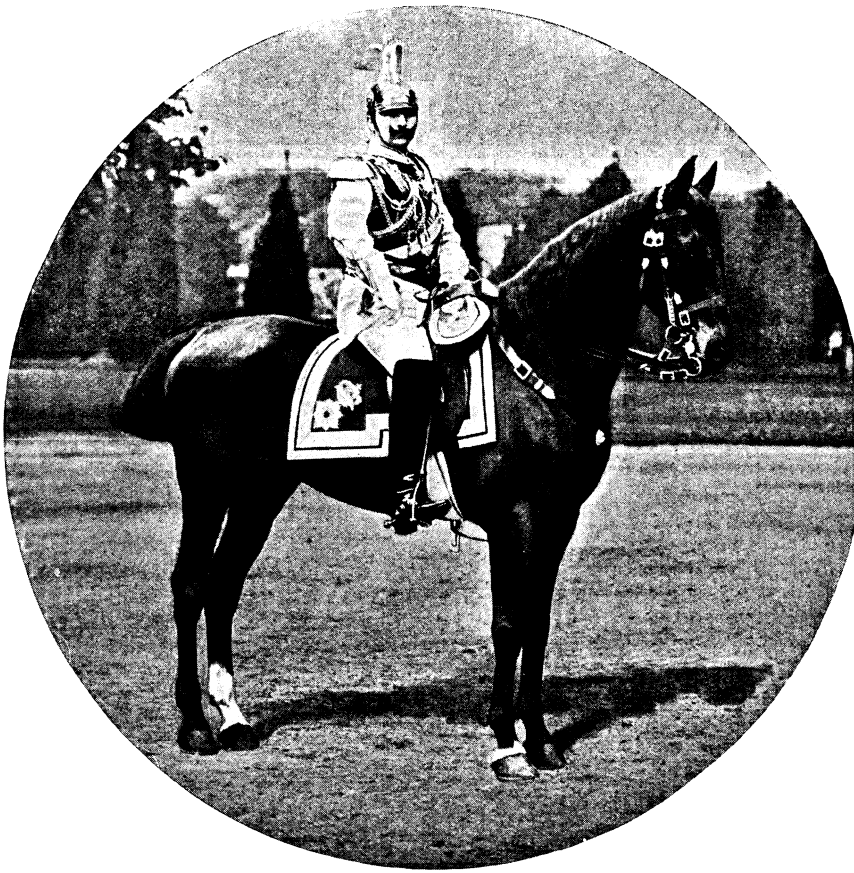

THE KAISER AS A SOLDIER.

The Emperor is head of the Army and the Navy, colonel of fourteen German regiments, and of a Russian, a Portuguese, and a British regiment—the 1st (Royal) Dragoons—and also a field-marshal of the British Army. He is an admiral of the British, Swedish, Danish, and Russian navies.

Dr. Hingpeter added several white hairs to his head owing to our disappearance, but he will never know what happened to us unless he reads this. He was a strange tutor for so courageous and enterprising a lad as the future Kaiser—he would have been more congenially employed in directing the exercises of theological students or stimulating the intellect of a ladies' seminary. He had a gentle, cautious nature, somewhat desiccated as regards flesh and blood; but he had a scholarly mind and was a conscientious pedagogue. He was eternally worrying lest his princely pupil receive damage, and it was, perhaps, this very quality in him that provoked us to enterprises of a somewhat reckless nature.

On another occasion we were having supper in the gardens, a meal of milk, bread-and-butter, stewed fruit, and some very simple raisin-cake. It was a pretty picture of a children's party, all the little princesses being there, as well as Prince Henry, who now commands the German Navy. The cake excited much interest, for it was a luxury highly prized in a household where the diet was measured by hygienic rather than Imperial principles.

The future Kaiser nudged me and with a voice full of pride whispered: "Do you see that cake? Isn't it magnificent?" I assented, though at that moment I saw no particular occasion for becoming enthusiastic. "Well," said he, "my mother made that!"

Of course, then I appreciated the force of what he said, although I did not permit him to rest in the notion that his mother was better at that sort of thing than mine. So, before the cake was cut, I offered to bet him that my mother could make a rice-pudding that would equal his mother's cake. That bet never came off; but I hasten to add that, great as the Empress was in the studio, she was greater still in the kitchen.

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The father of William II., the late Emperor Frederick, was of an eminently human, sympathetic, and cultivated nature. He would invariably come with his wife arm-in-arm, strolling through the park to where his little guests and his children were at play, and never fail to add cheerfulness to the scene. He was a strict disciplinarian as a soldier, but at home he was entirely the happy husband and father. He has been blamed for permitting his wife to exert ascendency over him—at any rate, such ascendency but emphasised the affection he had for her. The royal couple were adored by their children, and by none more so than the one who, when Emperor, was condemned as an unnatural son.

It is too long a story to enter upon here. So far as I know, William II. loved his mother as every son should. If he had occasion to show any other feeling, it was never towards her as a woman, but strictly on grounds of political or military expediency, in which was mingled no personal bitterness.

His is a highly complex character; there is something in him to represent nearly all of his eminent ancestors right up to the Great Elector, who may be regarded as the founder of the Prussian State. He himself is an artist of considerable imaginative force, if not technical power—a gift from his mother. From her he also inherits the extraordinary versatility which makes him to-day the most universally well-informed man of whom I know. He has read pretty well everything worth reading. His marvellous memory enables him to draw upon this reservoir of knowledge at will, and in addition he has a personal acquaintance with nearly every man who is identified with human progress in any part of the world, and he can talk both clearly and suggestively on nearly every subject of interest to the welfare of mankind. He knows the machinery of a man-o'-war as well as the mysteries of a coal-mine; he can handle a locomotive as well as a division of cavalry. He can tell you the productive power of every country in the world, and he is an encyclopædia of the material conditions of his own people.

This is the picture of a materialist, an economist, a Yankee-minded man of affairs. And with it he exhibits the quality inherited from his father of winning, by a sympathetic smile and a pleasant word, the goodwill of those he meets.

From his grandfather he inherits the soldierly simplicity and fidelity to the traditions of his House which characterised that venerable monarch. To-day his grandson preserves with pious care the iron camp-cot on which the hero of Sedan and Sadowa habitually slept, and we may trace to filial piety the extraordinary magnanimity with which he treated the utterances of Bismarck after his dismissal from office in 1890.

Frederick William IV., the brother of old William I., was noted for his romantic devotion to religious symbols and everything connected with mediæval and feudal Europe. He was the most gifted orator which the Hohenzollern dynasty had produced, and he died bereft of his reason. In the present Emperor we have a man who has done more for the outward observance of religion than any of his predecessors, excepting Frederick William IV. In his reign Berlin at last received a cathedral worthy of her municipal rank, and the German Court at last gave to the public a Christian example regarding behaviour on the Sabbath Day.

He is an orator, and no mere maker of phrases. On the many occasions when I have heard him speak, I can recall none when he did not exhibit suggestive knowledge as well as capacity for dramatic effect. His speeches have this quality that raises them far above the average—they are the words of a man who is in dead earnest.

His taste for military exercise is one which almost all his ancestors have exhibited. In Germany the ruler is not merely nominal commander-in-chief, as is the American President, or King Edward VII. in England, but he is expected to take the field with his Army and to be responsible for the campaign. The German Army rises and falls in value according to the personal quality of its commander. It lost much of its vigour during the closing years of Frederick William III. Under his successor, Frederick William IV., who was a fat, unsoldierly man, it became extremely demoralised.

William I., profiting by past disasters, brought it, with the help of Moltke, to the perfection it showed in 1870, but in the seventeen years of peace it suffered somewhat from the venerable Emperor's growing disinclination to pension off old generals who had been personal friends, but had survived their military usefulness.

William II. had no sooner come to power (1888) than he gave the Army attention of a strictly business nature. He appreciated fully the services of the old generals who had campaigned with his grandfather, but at the same time he could not permit the Army

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THE LATEST PORTRAIT OF THE KAISER.

FROM THE PAINTING BY MR. A. S. COPE, A.R.A., EXHIBITED IN THIS YEAR'S ROYAL ACADEMY.

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THE EMPEROR OUT FOR A DAY'S SPORT.
His Majesty is pointing over the shoulder of Ober-Jägermeister Heintze.

List to be burdened with any name that did not mean efficiency. So he commenced to weed out the incompetent, the feeble, the superannuated.

At his first great autumn exercises, in 1888, not far from Berlin, he gave his warriors a foretaste of what to expect in the future, and the result was that all the elderly commanders commenced to feel uncomfortable.

During those manœuvres I was frequently a witness to scenes of far-reaching consequence, though they looked simple enough in themselves, if not amusing. The Emperor would be surrounded by a large staff of distinguished officers. Suddenly he would break from his circle and gallop off across country to some distant point of the field of war, to reach which would call for a good seat in the saddle. The Emperor always managed to find a ditch or so to jump in the course of this gallop. Those who kept up with him in these dashes might regard themselves as still vigorous in body; but those who failed to put in an appearance after the gallop were carefully noted as incapacitated for the hard work of a real campaign.

At this first great military manœuvre the Emperor commanded a force of thirty thousand men with a dexterity that excited the admiration of old soldiers. He looked personally to every detail of his own movements, and while he made one or two errors that were promptly utilised by his opponent, on the whole he inspired the confidence of those best qualified to judge. He has since confirmed his people in the belief that should a war once more break out, he would become a second Frederick the Great, leading his Army in person.

During those first grand manœuvres I recall him one day standing on a slight rise of ground near the highway, absorbed with his map in connection with some artillery fire that preceded a projected infantry attack. During this fire, there passed him a schoolboy on a bicycle, and at once he turned to a friend near by and said with force: "That is the sort of thing I like to see—youngsters strengthening themselves out in the fresh air, getting rid of the schoolroom stuffiness."

This Emperor has done more for the elevation of amateur sport in Germany than any of his predecessors, not only by offering prizes and personally attending the most important contests, but by sharing in the sport himself. On land or water, there is no

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manly sport that he has not cultivated, and he has brought up his children as "chips of the old block."

This is not meant as a political article, so I shall not discuss here the Emperor's qualities as a ruler. He does many things which would make him an undesirable candidate for the Presidency of the United States, and he does things which even Germans regard as unconstitutional. But, then, he says that he knows his Germans, and treats them as they deserve to be treated.

If he had been born in America, he would act according to American conditions; and if he had to rule in England, he would alter his conduct accordingly.

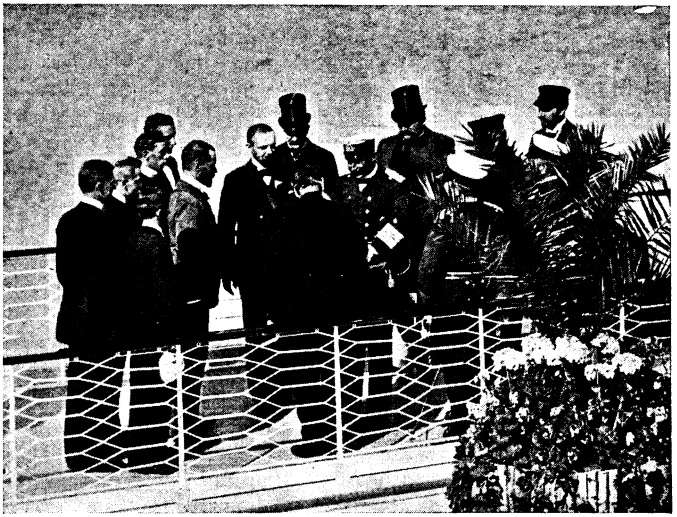

Photo by] [*The International Press Agency.*

THE KAISER CONGRATULATING A WINNING CREW AT BERLIN REGATTA.

One day—I think it was about the year 1891—the Emperor had asked me to walk with him through the town of Potsdam. It was a drizzly, raw day in November, the streets were muddy, the weather depressing, and our conversation turned upon recent

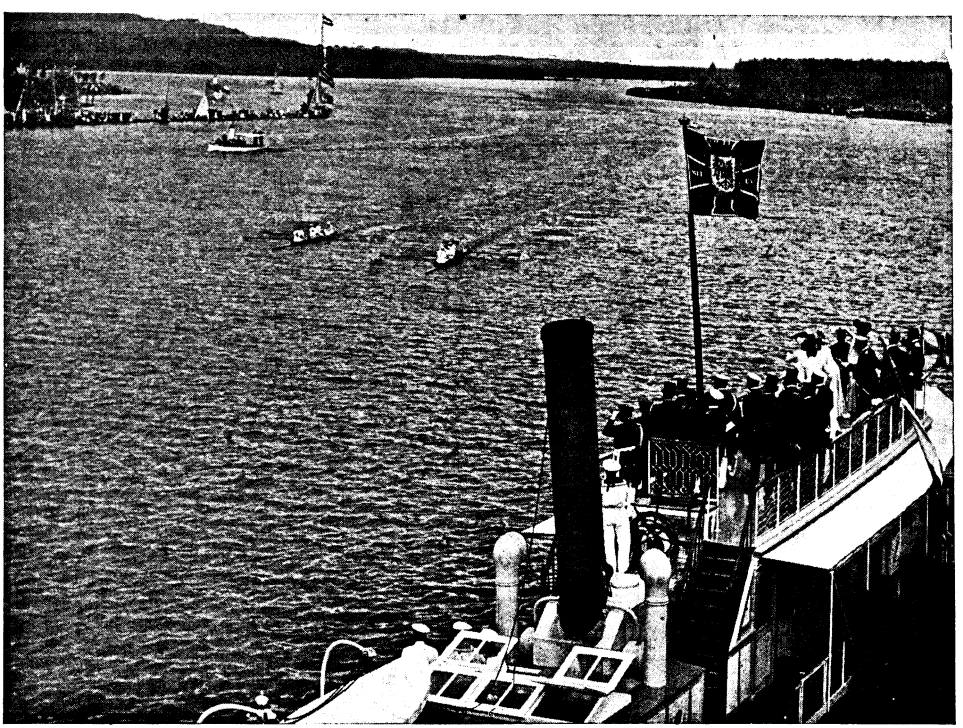

Photo by] [*The International Press Agency.*

THE KAISER ON HIS STEAM-YACHT AT BERLIN REGATTA.

"He has done more for the elevation of amateur sport in Germany than any of his predecessors."

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attempts to murder the Russian Emperor. It was a curious thing that though at that time William II. had been three years on the throne, and was walking through a town where he had been brought up from childhood, scarcely anyone recognised him as he walked rapidly amongst his people. The sidewalks were narrow, and he frequently took to the muddy road in order to get along faster. Like Theodore Roosevelt, William II. walks rapidly and talks in time. He passed unobserved and unprotected mainly because no one expected their Emperor to be hurrying along on foot in the mud amidst the crowd of market people and peasants. He wore his military overcoat, and nine people out of ten would have passed him as a young captain in the Guards suggesting the Emperor in appearance, as do very many, by reason of their imitating his moustache and manner.

In the course of this murderful conversation I had occasion to point out that there was a vast amount of difference between the Tsar of Russia and the Emperor of Germany.

"How so?" queried the Kaiser.

"For one thing," said I, "the Tsar of Russia would not be walking this way through the streets."

"Why not?" queried the Kaiser.

"He would be afraid of a Nihilist bomb."

"Oh, is that all?" was the rejoinder. "How would that work?"

"Why," said I, 'in Russia there might be a bomb beneath that next sewer-covering."

The Emperor, for all answer, marched straight at the iron lid to the sewer and gave it a loud stamp with his foot. Then he laughed heartily and said: "Why, if I had to stop and think about such things, I should not get through with my work!"

There was no swagger about this, no boasting; it is typical of the man. The papers—notably the American ones—do him great injustice by persistently printing things about him that are merely sensational. From his speeches they extract only what may be twisted into something eccentric—they do not render justice by quoting his words verbatim.

Of course, he is not a Republican and has no sympathy with government by the people, but it is of great importance for us to realise that he is a strong human force, fully alive to the needs of his people in a great variety of ways, and that he studies all questions of national progress and development with close interest.

NATURE.

NATURE, the dream that wraps us round,
One comforting and saving whole;
And as the clothes to the body of man,
The mantle of the soul.

Nature, the door that opens wide
From this close, fetid house of ill;
That lifts from curse of street to vast
Receding hill on hill.

Nature, the mood, now sweet of night,
Now grand and splendid, large, of day;
From vast skyline and cloudy towers
To stars in heaven that stray.

Nature, the hope, the truth, the gleam,
Beyond this bitter cark and dole;
Whose walls the infinite weft of dream,
Whose gift is to console.

W. WILFRED CAMPBELL.

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THE UNKNOWN QUANTITY.

By ALICK MUNRO.*

MERRICK was a crank. There were even those who said that he was a dangerous crank and feared for his sanity. I thought him an enthusiast and knew him to be an extraordinarily able mathematician; and I had suspicions that he had been experimenting lately with opium. These facts, I thought, accounted for most things.

Moreover, he was a Don, and I was only an undergraduate in my fourth year. So when he condescended to make a chum of me during that Vac., I was flattered; and when people—the Dean among others—shook their heads forebodingly and hinted that he was on the road to a lunatic asylum, I made it a point of honour to lose my temper in his defence.

I had come up early to Oxford that term to read for my physiology finals, and to put in a little dissecting at the Museum before the lectures began. Merrick invariably spent his Christmas vacations in Oxford, and the Dean had come up to attend to official business, so we three had the college to ourselves. Four nights before the beginning of term, I was reading in my rooms, very late, when Merrick flung the door open suddenly and stood in the doorway, laughing and making quick little movements with his fingers. The cord of his dressing-gown caught for a moment in the wire letter-box of the "oak," and the heavy door closed with a snap behind him, shutting out the light from the gas-jets on the staircase. He stood in the space between the two doors, smiling with the leer of a cathedral grotesque, and my reading-lamp picked him out in silhouette against the black panels. It was a curious picture, elfish and uncanny; for he was ugly, with the fine ugliness of perfect features which do not match. His shadow on the "oak" was a nightmare by Doré.

I closed my notebook and pointed to a chair. He threw himself into it, laughing still. I noticed that the pupils of his eyes were shrunk to pin-points, and there was the gleam of a faint perspiration on his forehead. I leaned over quickly and touched his hand. He had crossed two quads to come from his rooms to mine, and I had seen an hour ago that the thermometer at the foot of the staircase registered fourteen degrees of frost; but his skin was warm and moist.

He knew what my action meant and he laughed again softly.

"Yes," he said, "I admit it. That's the worst of you physiologists, you're trained detectives. Luckily you're not given to preaching."

"How much to-day?" I asked.

"About 120 drops, I think—*Tinct: Opii: B.P.*—and I mean to try 200 to-morrow. But De Quincey used to take 8,000."

"Why do you do it?" I asked. "You know the risks."

"I can stop it when I please."

"That," I said slowly, "*is* the risk."

"Is it?" he cried, jumping to his feet and throwing his head back. "Then I accept it! You mean that I can't stop it. Well, if I can't—what then?"

"An asylum, perhaps."

"But I have done my work first, and the stuff has helped me!" he cried with a strange violence. "Look at me and tell me what kind of man you see! A little, big-headed, mathematical tutor, ugly as a gargoyle, and pitied for his ugliness by every Somerville girl who attends his lectures. Yes, I'm that. But to-night I am as a god, knowing good and evil. And you—you, the physiologist—you who dissect emotions with a scalpel, and know of nothing in man that your knife cannot cut—you would put the god into a lunatic asylum!"

He broke off suddenly, seemed to pull himself up sharply as a man puts the curb on a runaway, and then went on quietly again with a half-apologetic gesture—

"Sorry, old man; I'm letting myself exaggerate, and that's unscientific. Unmathematical, too, so it jars on us both. No, I'm not a god yet, because I don't know the unknowable. But here's fact—demonstrable

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fact—I have pushed back the limit of the knowable so far to-night that I can see behind the veil, and I know how and why I see. There is another world, in and about the material world which alone you can see, which alone I could see till an hour ago. I have seen it and I have discovered the law which rules it."

He stopped and gazed into the fire. His violence was gone, and he had spoken these last sentences with as little passion as he would have shown in demonstrating a problem of the higher mathematics; but the light of a conquering enthusiasm glowed about him. He looked up into my face, waiting for me to speak.

"Others," I said, "have claimed that power before you. But they have used it to tell fortunes or to turn tables. They say they come from Thibet mostly, and speak with the accent of Whitechapel."

"Quacks!" he said with a laugh. "You're a little bit cruel."

"Some of them believed honestly in the powers they professed," I answered. "The Psychical Research Society——"

"Is a jury of old women," he cut in, "and as gullible. They know some truths, and they swallow many lies. I won't lay my discovery before them!"

"What is your discovery?"

He took out a pipe, asked me for tobacco by a gesture, filled the pipe slowly, lit it carefully, and then lay back in his chair and blew clouds about his head. Then he said quietly: "The Fourth Dimension."

"Ah! An inconceivable non-existence! You called it that yourself the other night," I reminded him.

"Did I? I was in the dumps that night. I have proved now that it does exist."

I looked at the glistening forehead and the beaded pupils, and I smiled as I suggested softly: "In an opium dream."

"No," he said; "on paper. Mathematically demonstrable, if you had the knowledge to enable you to follow my proof."

"But I haven't," I said. And then, for his earnestness impressed me, I added: "Can you tell me without formulæ?"

He was an orator. I had never suspected it till now, for he had the reputation of being a bad lecturer of good lectures. Was it the opium—"eloquent opium," as De Quincey calls it. Or was it only the gift of tongues which comes to every man when his thoughts are big and his enthusiasm is new? He told me of months of work, all tending to the same goal; of calculations begun with an eager hope and never finished, because despair foreshadowed an impotent conclusion; of the steady building up of a theory by a page, a line, a single formula, the result of many nights of toil; and then of the little error which shattered the whole fabric and sent him back to the starting-place; of doubts whether the problem were soluble at all; of certainty that he, and he alone, would find the solution. And lastly, of success.

I have watched a girl's face when she told that the man she loved had asked her to be his wife; and I have watched Merrick's, when he spoke, and spoke quietly, of the moment when he knew that he had succeeded. The look in both was the same, and yet the girl was beautiful.

Stripped of its technicalities, his argument was not difficult to follow. "Common belief," he said, "recognises three dimensions only—two horizontal and one vertical—and calls them length, breadth, and height; and the world of phenomena is contained in those three. And common belief is in this case supported by science, which declares that anything beyond this is philosophically inconceivable. But it is only an arbitrary boundary, after all, a terminus imposed by the limitations of our merely human senses. Suppose, for the sake of argument, a being so constituted that he was able to appreciate only two of the dimensions which make up our world, say length and breadth. To such a being everything would be flat, the surface of a carpet seen from the floor-level, a map to be studied by an eye in the paper on which it was drawn; height and thickness would be notions which he could not grasp; solidity would, to him, be non-existent. You, with your three-dimension senses, know that there is such a thing as solidity, but my two-dimension being would not understand you when you spoke of it. He would tell you that the third dimension, by which you endeavoured to explain the thing which he could not imagine, was philosophically inconceivable. And, of course, he would be right."

Merrick paused, smoked for a while in silence, and then went on.

"He would be right, absolutely right, within his limitations; to him a third dimension would be philosophically inconceivable. And you, when you say that there are three dimensions and only three, are right, within your limitations; to you a fourth dimension is philosophically inconceivable. And I, when I say that there is a fourth dimension, am right, too; for I have seen it."

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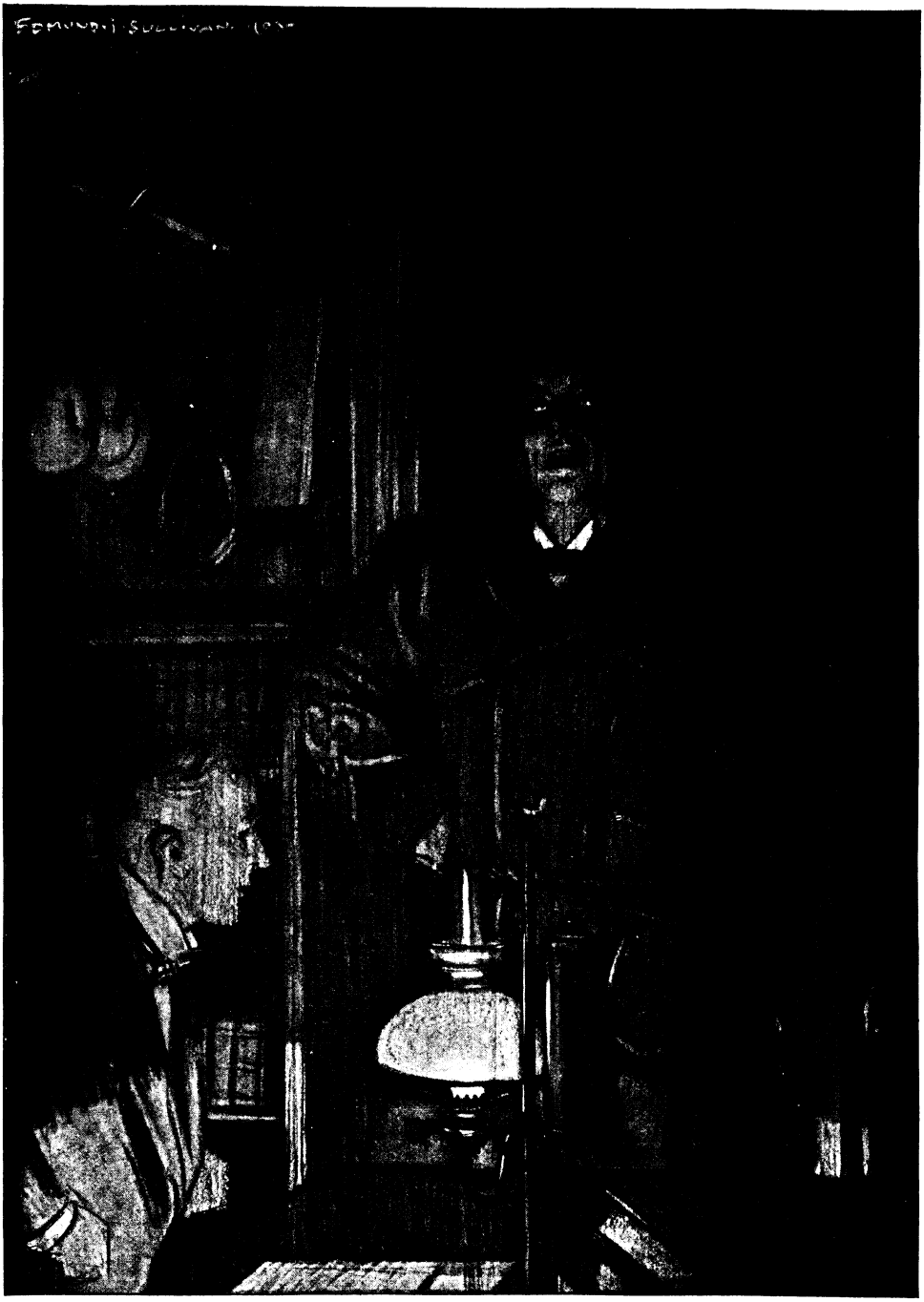

" My reading-lamp picked him out in silhouette against the black panels."

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"Do you see it now?" I asked.

"No. At this moment it is to me, as to you, philosophically inconceivable. A convenient phrase that, by the way. I cannot tell you what it is; I cannot even imagine it—just now. But an hour ago I could and did see it, for a moment; and I can tell you something of what it showed me. Do you believe in clairvoyance?"

"I don't know," I said. "The evidence is difficult, but I think I do."

"You think you do! Then you have an aid to understanding which I had not, for I started on my quest as a sceptic. I did not believe in the thing I set out to prove—handicap enough, that, to any investigator—and yet I have proved it. Come to my rooms and see my work."

"Shall I understand it?"

"No."

"Then let's stay here. Can't you give me some hint of what this fourth dimension is?—some analogy which will help me to imagine it? Bring the idea down to my level."

"I can't—any more than you could bring the idea of solidity down to the level of our two-dimension being. That's just the difficulty. I don't for a moment suppose that I'm the first who has worked the thing out. Others have done before what I did this afternoon; but they were not believed, because they could not explain. I shall not be believed either, because I can't explain. Man, don't you see that if I could explain to the world of three dimensions what I mean by the fourth, the world of three dimensions would, by the mere act of understanding, become a world of four? I *can't* tell you what it is; and even if you were to see it yourself as I saw it, I doubt whether we should understand one another if we tried to put into words what we saw. It is all indefinite; a mere shadow of thinking, and hardly that. A shadow's shadow is all."

"And yet," I objected, "you were definite enough just now. You called yourself a god, who had pushed back the curtain of the unknowable."

"Hyperbole, of course; but I was speaking by results," he answered. "You do not know what electricity is—no one living does—but you judge it by what it does, and lay down laws for its action. You asked for an analogy just now. There I give it you. I do not know what the Fourth Dimension is; but I judge it by what it showed me. And later, when I know more of it, I too will perhaps turn theorist and lay down my little parcel of laws. Meanwhile listen!

"For a certain space of time this afternoon—a moment or an hour, I do not know—I transcended the limits of human sense. Space was annihilated, and all time was the present. The material barriers of sense did not exist for me. No walls hid the faces of my friends from me. Yesterday was to-day, the past was now, and my whole life focused itself upon a moment. And yet the details were all sharp and clear; it was no blurred and confused image, but a precise actuality. Every place my memory held a picture of, every person I had ever known, every word I had spoken, every thought of my forty-three years of life—all these were before me, simultaneously, and yet separately; comprehensively, yet definitely; as one harmonious picture, and as a thousand separate scenes. It was grand. It was a revelation of the infinitely great and of the infinitely little, and of infinite harmony in both great and little. And it was very terrible. I saw myself as a child of four, playing with a spade in a sand-hole; and I saw myself sitting at my desk to-day, with a pen in my hand and a paper of formulæ before me. I saw you—— Ah!" he broke off, "you asked for proofs! but will you believe them?"

"If I can understand them," I said.

"Oh, the old proviso!" he answered impatiently. "The old, hackneyed, unnecessary cry for understanding! Why should you understand? Is a man to believe nothing, then, that he does not understand?"

"Yes," I said. "Many things. But belief comes easier when——"

"When understanding—poor, finite, three-dimension human understanding—backs it!" he finished for me. "Well, you will understand this. I saw you at your work in the Museum this afternoon. You were dissecting, and your subject—stop me if I am wrong—was a body very much emaciated, hardly more than a skeleton. The ribs stuck out through the stretched skin like basket-work, and all the organs were terribly wasted. The state of the lungs—you were dissecting the lungs—told you that death had been due to acute pleurisy. Am I right?"

"Absolutely, so far. There were extensive adhesions on both sides."

"Yes, I saw that; and I saw that you found the dissection difficult because of those adhesions. Your subject was a somewhat unusual one to find in an English dissecting-room—darker in the skin than an Englishman usually is, and more hairy—in fact, not an Englishman at all. Again am I right?"

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"Certainly not an Englishman," I said; "but——"

"Wait!" he interrupted. "Let me tell the thing in my own way. I want to convince you. He wasn't an Englishman, but a native of sunnier climes, and the rigour of our English winter had been too much for him. Well, that often happens; so we will leave him and talk of something else. Did I ever tell you that I was once in the Diplomatic Service?"

The *non sequitur* was violent. Merrick's eyes had grown dull, and the whites were bloodshot. His excitement had vanished. I judged that the opium was running its course.

"No," I said, "I did not know it. But about this dissection subject of mine—I don't think——"

"Oh, never mind him! He can wait! He's dead, poor devil! so he won't grow impatient. Besides, I'm coming back to him later. I want to talk about a girl now. No, it's all right, old man; don't be alarmed; I'm not wandering. You'll see presently how the girl fits in to everything I've been telling you. But don't interrupt. I *must* tell the story in my own way. I've got a curious sensation just now, as though the working part of my brain had taken the reins into its own hands and were following a line of thought of its own, without any particular need of guidance from me. I see where the line is leading, and it's all right; but if you drive me off the track, I don't think I could get back to-night. And I want to tell you the thing to-night.

"She was a governess—nothing more than that. I believe you might even have called her a nursery governess without being insulting, for her charge was a kid of seven, the daughter of one of the Embassy secretaries. But, bless you! she was only seventeen herself, and she had what people call 'a way with her'; so the whole Paris Embassy just conspired to make a pet of her, and gave her about as good a time as any girl need want to have. It wasn't the conventional, down-trodden, self-effacing *rôle* that Molly Wisdom was called upon to play. Quaint name, isn't it? But the Little Wisdom, as we called her, wasn't very wise, after all. She was too childish, too pretty, and too lavishly spoiled and worshipped to give her a chance of being wise. We English *attachés*—I was the most junior of 'em—were all her slaves to a man; but of the lot of us, I believed I was the favourite. She treated us all pretty much like a squad of good-natured elder brothers, and used freely her privilege of ordering us about. But in spite of this, I wasn't jealous of the other fellows—not particularly, that is. I was an ugly little wretch, you know, even in those days; but my ugliness was luckily pronounced enough to win me a certain distinction, while the others were just average, decent-looking young Englishmen, neither particularly plain nor particularly handsome, merely ordinary. That being so, I thought, and I think still, that in the matter of looks the advantage lay with me.

"But though my ugliness put me easily ahead of these fellows who were merely ordinary, it wasn't a strong enough weapon to fight against a beauty that was as extraordinary as my ugliness. Beauty isn't a term that one naturally applies to a man; but Manoel D'Albuquerque was beautiful. And of him I was jealous, hysterically, insanely jealous. He was a Brazilian Portuguese, absurdly rich, and maddeningly gentle-tempered. He would let no one ruffle him, though my fingers itched to spring on him and score his cheeks with my nails, like any harridan in a slum brawl. He roused all the devil there was in me, but he wouldn't quarrel.

"Molly was fascinated by him. I asked her to be my wife, and she refused me; and I knew it was because of him. If you know anything of Brazilians, you can picture faintly the sort of beauty that the brute had, black and bright, very brilliant, and devilish. Lots of them have got it, but this one was the most brilliant of them all. He was not a cad, either—perfectly straight, perfectly gentlemanly, and universally popular. I tried my hardest to find out something to his discredit; but I failed. The man was a gentleman all right. And I, in my efforts to give him a fall, did things which hardly left me the right to claim as much.

"I heard that he had asked Molly to marry him, and that she had said 'Yes.' I took the news with a smile, and affected to be glad that she was making such a brilliant match. I chatted for a while with the woman who told me, and then I went to my bedroom; and I think that, for one night, I went mad. If a Bedlamite jealousy and a mind that riots in schemes of murder constitute madness, then I was mad. But I did not make a scene. I fled. I would have killed him, and laughed as I did it, if I could have struck him without striking Molly too. But since she loved him, that was impossible.

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"I did not try to see her again. I wrote a brief note to the Ambassador, resigning my appointment, and then, as I tell you, fled. I didn't stop to think. If I had done that, I should have killed D'Albuquerque. I boarded the Sud-Express and found myself in Madrid before I had decided what I meant to do. I stayed there a day, roaming the streets like a man demented, and then in the afternoon I found myself watching a bullfight. How I got there, I do not know, nor why I went; but I think it was the sight of a horse's blood spouting on to the sand, and the poor gored brute's dying agonies, that first brought me to my senses and revealed to me that my thoughts were bloody, too. In the midst of that shouting Spanish mob, with my eyes following the incidents of the mixture of graceful play and callous cruelty which is a Spanish bullfight, I sat and thought out what I must do.

"I very nearly went back to Paris; for my maniac jealousy was still prompting me to murder. I saw a *matador* go down as his horse fell, and the bull gored him. The noisy crowd was hushed for a moment. Dead, or only hurt? They carried him out, and a minute later the ring was applauding a smart piece of dart work by a *banderillero*. There were parables in this for me. What a simple thing seemed the death of a man, and how little the world regarded it, since it could not still the laughter of this holiday crowd for more than a moment! The *matador*, I heard someone near me say, was the famous Brazilian *espada*, Gonsalvez Quelho. A Brazilian, was he? And dead? There were omens and oracles in this, too. I nearly went back even then.

"But I was growing calmer now and saner. I did not go back to Paris. I went on to Gib, thence to Morocco, and the peace of the desert healed me. In a month I was my own man again—still madly in love with Molly, and still jealous of the man who had won her. But my jealousy was no longer extravagant and murderous. It had lost its froth, but its bite was, I think, all the keener on that account. Fortunately the wrecking of my career did not matter much. I have money, and it was just as well spent in world-loafing for my own good as it would have been in wearing a frock-coat and a white waistcoat for my country's. So for two years I loafed, and then I came back to Oxford. My college gave me a Fellowship, for in my day I had been one of their brilliant men. That's a good while ago now, though, and lately I've had the notion borne in upon me that I'm not so popular with them as I was. They are—shall we say?—disappointed in me. Well, youthful brilliancy isn't a good wearing stuff at the best."

Merrick stopped speaking and sat with his chin in his hands, watching the frosty blue in the fire. His voice in the latter part of his tale had grown dull and weary, and I saw that he had difficulty in keeping his eyes from closing. Now that his excitement was dead, he looked tired and ill. I waited a moment for him to speak again and then I touched his arm.

"How long is it since you slept?" I asked.

"I don't know," he answered drowsily. "About two days, I suppose. I've been working."

"And taking opium?" I asked.

"Only this afternoon. It helped me to finish."

"Well, go to bed now."

He stood up and yawned heavily.

"All right," he said. "But don't you want the sequel?"

"Do you know it?"

"Yes," he said, with another yawn. "Saw it all this afternoon. It's rather a queer end, you know, because——" He yawned again. "I say, old man, I'm awfully sleepy. Come to my rooms with me."

I put my arm round him, for he was swaying with sleep.

"Well?" I said, as I helped him down the stairs. "The sequel?"

"Eh? The sequel?" he answered, speaking in drowsy jerks. "I don't know. Queer! I knew five minutes ago. It's—no, I've forgotten."

His head fell forward and all his weight came upon me. The drug, kept at bay hitherto by an unnatural excitement, would be denied no longer. He was fast asleep, and I had to carry him across the two quads to his rooms.

During the next two days I saw nothing of him. I went to his rooms three times, but twice out of the three he was not there, and the other time his scout told me that he was sleeping heavily and had been in bed all the morning. On the last night of the Vac. I went again and found him at his desk, writing busily. He looked up at my entrance, jerked his head in the direction of an armchair, and went on writing. I sat down and waited for him. For ten minutes or so he continued; then with a scrawl and a flourish he finished and threw down his pen.

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"'I have seen her in the flesh, here, in Oxford, day before yesterday.'"

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"There," he said, "that's done, so far as I am concerned. But I think I must get you to write a postscript."

"What is it?" I asked.

"A biography. How's the dissecting getting on?"

"Finished," I said. "The rooms will be cleared to-morrow to make room for the term's work."

"Ah! So you've finished, too. Good!" he said, with a satisfaction that seemed to me rather pointless; and then turning sharply and facing me, he added: "What becomes of the bodies when you've done with them?"

"The human subjects are buried. I don't know about the others."

"Christian burial?"

"Yes, I believe so. Why?"

"Oh, nothing. I think it ought to be, that's all. Have a drink?"

"No, thank you. I'm going to read presently. I only came to see how you were."

"You are anxious about me?"

"I think you take too much opium."

With a laugh he stood up and came opposite to me, bringing his face close to mine and holding his hand out for me to grasp.

"See for yourself," he said. "Skin dry, pupils reasonably dilated. You can read the signs?"

I took the hand he offered and looked closely into his eyes. He met my scrutiny steadily, and his pulse beat firm under my fingers.

"You have not taken any to-day," I said. "I am glad."

"Nor yesterday; nor shall I to-morrow," he told me. "I have given it up absolutely, because I have got something new to live for—something that will not allow of my taking the risks that the drug holds. Will you guess what that something is?"

"Your discovery?"

"Oh, yes, that! But something better than that, too. I have seen her, you know."

I nodded. "Yes," I answered; "I supposed you had. In fact, you told me you had. '*Every face I had ever known—every thought of my forty-three years of life.*' Those were your words. Molly Wisdom's face would naturally be in the picture."

"Oh! *then?*" he cried. "Yes, of course, I saw her then! But I don't mean that. I mean that I have seen her in the flesh, here, in Oxford, day before yesterday; to be precise, in Blackwell's shop in the Broad, at 10.15 a.m. She was buying copybooks. You see what that means?"

"Children," I suggested. "Then the Brazilian——"

"Yes, children, of course," he interrupted. "But not her own. She is a nursery governess still, and she's still Molly Wisdom. So, you see"—he gave me a queer look—"it is worth my while to do without the opium."

"Did you speak to her?"

"Yes. We talked for an hour, and she told me of her life. It is fifteen years since I saw her, remember. But each thing she told me I knew before she told it. I had seen it all three days ago; but I let her tell on, for it was pleasant to hear her voice again. When I came to your rooms the other night, I knew that she had not married the Brazilian, and that I was going to see her again soon. I meant to tell you that, if I had not grown so sleepy. It was a tragic blunder that I made in Paris fifteen years ago; for she did not accept him, as I had been told, and as, in my senseless jealousy, I believed. She refused him; and if I had stayed, perhaps I might have won her, after all. I'm going to try now, if it isn't too late. Man, can you realise the tragedy of those fifteen years? For me—wasted; and for her—— Poor little Molly! a nursery governess still!"

He began to pace the room. His lip was trembling, and his fingers were twitching with emotion, as they had twitched once before when he proclaimed to me that he was a god; but this was the generous emotion that does a man's nerves good and keeps his heart young, not the fantastic enthusiasm of that scene of three nights ago.

"How goes the discovery?" I asked him. "Have you learned anything more about it?"

"No," he said, "I have not. And, what's worse, I can't. I tried to-day, repeating the method that was successful before, but I got no result. However, I don't despair. I may have made some error in my calculations to-day that I avoided the other time; something very small it may have been—must have been, in fact—because I went through all the work twice and I couldn't find it. Or there may have been something in my own state of mind or health—in default of a better term, shall we say some psychic condition?—which was present three days ago and absent to-day. I am working very much in the dark as yet, you understand;

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but I shall go on trying. I have succeeded once, so I shall succeed again. And it's worth a bit of hard work."

"What would you say if I told you where the error was?" I asked.

"Say? I'd bless you. But you can't. You don't understand my work."

"Granted. But I can put my finger on your error. It is merely this—you left out the unknown quantity."

He gave me a quick look. "Perhaps," he said. "But that's what I intended to convey by the term 'psychic condition.' It's quite an unknown quantity as yet. We will call it the personal equation, if you like the term better."

"Suppose we call it opium?" I said.

He did not answer for a moment; but I saw by his quick frown, and the absence of any surprise, that I had not suggested a new idea to him.

"Is that what you really think?" he asked at length, as he reached for the pile of manuscript which he had called a biography.

"Yes," I said.

For in spite of what he had told me about knowing Molly's words before they were spoken, and in spite of coincidences that were curious, I believed now that his vision of the Fourth Dimension was nothing but an opium dream.

"Then," he said, as he threw the closely written sheets on to my knees, "how do you explain this?"

"What is it?"

"A narrative of the life of Manoel D'Albuquerque, from a date fifteen years ago to nearly the present time. It is written by me, and yet I give you my word that from that day in Paris till now I have had no news of him. I have never spoken his name to anyone till I told it to you the other night, and I have never heard it spoken. Even Molly did not mention him yesterday."

"Then," I said, "this narrative is purely imaginary."

"It is fact."

"Ah! if you could prove that!"

"Why not? A man does not walk through life without leaving tracks. We can hunt up those tracks, if necessary. But it won't be necessary, because you can furnish the proof."

"I?" I asked in astonishment. "How?"

"Read what I have written, and see. I have left the last half-page blank for you to fill in what you like. I told you I should want you to write a tailpiece for me. No, don't read it here. It's long, and I want to do some more work before I go to bed. Take it to your rooms. I will come for it in the morning. Good-night, and try, if you can, not to be so confoundedly sceptical. You physiologists are all tarred with the brush of unbelief; and, if you will take an older man's word for it, it's a brush that leaves a nasty smudge. Good-night."

He opened the door and waited for me to go. He was out of temper, and I fancied that it was my suggestion about the unknown quantity that had annoyed him. I should have liked to stay, but he was a Don and I was an undergraduate, so I had to accept my dismissal.

His manuscript kept me awake half the night. I read it and re-read it, and marvelled at its power. It realised more completely than anything I had ever read the Aristotelian definition of tragedy—pity and terror; but the terror, the horror, rather—came first, and the pity only towards the end. It told of the gradual moral degeneration of a brilliant man, and then of his material ruin. Step by step his career was traced, each step a little lower than the one before. But there was nothing artificial in the tale, nothing forced, no development that did not arise naturally from all that had preceded it; the man seemed to be driven steadily downwards by a Nemesis that he could not fight. Each step in the descent was forced upon him irresistibly, inevitably; and yet—and in this was the greatest horror—one knew that it was all his own fault. A Nemesis pursued him, indeed; but it was the Nemesis of his own actions. He was loaded with a chain of his own forging.

If it was fact, it was terrible. If it was fiction, it was hardly less terrible. For it was plain to see how Merrick had hated the man.

His fall was described with a skill that amounted to genius; but for the first three-quarters of the tale it was an uncanny genius, cold and cruel in its vindictiveness. Towards the end, the writer's mood seemed to have changed; the pity of what he wrote seemed to take hold of him and to make him forget his hate. The last scene but one, a scene in a county lunatic asylum, was written with a compelling simplicity and with a wonderful tenderness. It was the deathbed of an unknown, unnamed pauper—the man who had once been Manoel D'Albuquerque.

Had the story ended there, I might have believed that it was true, that in some strange way Merrick had really seen the

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things which he wrote. But there was one page more, a picture of the dissecting-room in which I had been working; and from this I knew that all the rest was false. Here, where Merrick expected me to prove him right, I proved him wrong. I wrote three sentences in the blank space he had left for me; and the story, horrible before, became, by the addition, merely fantastic.

Next day he came to my rooms immediately after Hall, and before I could speak, demanded my congratulations.

"We are to be married in the summer Vac.," he said, and his face was radiant with happiness.

"I am glad," I said simply, "because now I know that you will be safe. You were on a dangerous road, you know. And, by the way, I have written that postscript you wanted."

I expected him to be eager to see what I had written. Instead, he looked uncomfortable. He opened the manuscript and read my three sentences aloud.

"*You are wrong. As this is Vacation time, there are no bodies in the rooms at all. I have been dissecting a monkey.*"

"Well?" I asked, as he folded the paper up and seemed disinclined to speak.

"It is very queer," he said. "I don't understand it. Molly told me this morning that the man is alive and living in Paris now with his wife and three children. And yet I felt so sure that I knew. I wonder if you are right, and if the road to the Fourth Dimension does lie only down the path of drugs. Well, I have sworn to tread that path no more. So, if you are right, I shall not see it again."

"Will that matter," I asked, "since it showed you what was false?"

"Not all false!" he exclaimed with a sudden emphasis. "No, by Heaven, not all! For it told me that I should meet Molly again and be happy. I have met her, and we shall be happy; for there are fifteen years of misery to be blotted out."

AT SUNSET TIME.

ACROSS the uplands all day long
The wind's wild song
Wails like the spirits of the lost,
In pine trees tossed.
Rest follows storm. Day has its crown.
At sunset time the wind goes down.

The wind shrieks out the livelong day
Across the bay;
With tears the women watch from far
Ships on the bar.
Joy follows tears. Day has its crown.
At sunset time the wind goes down.

Pain's tossing winds sweep wailing by,
Make dark our sky;
On Life's rough waves, like ships at sea
We seem to be.
Peace follows strife. Life has its crown.
At sunset time the wind goes down.

L. G. MOBERLY.

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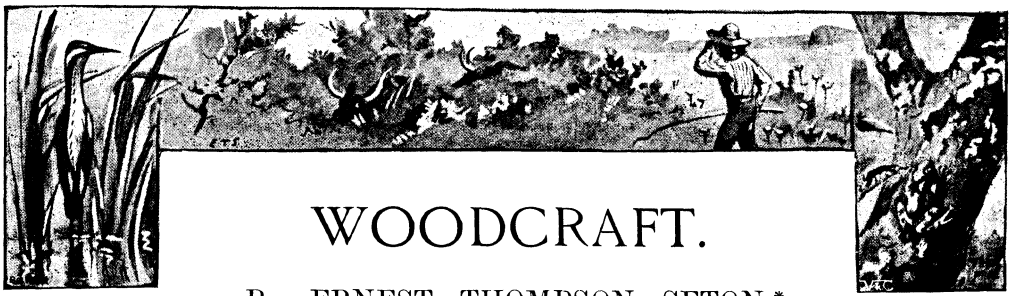

WOODCRAFT.

By ERNEST THOMPSON SETON.*

II.—ARCHERY AND "FREEZING."

THE modern hunting-gun is an irresistible weapon of wholesale murder, and is just as deadly no matter who pulls the trigger. It spreads terror as well as death by its loud discharge, and it leaves little clue as to who is responsible for the shot. Its deadly range is so fearfully great as to put all game at the mercy of the clumsiest tyro. Woodcraft, the oldest of all sciences and one of the best, has steadily declined since the coming of the gun, and it is entirely due to this same unbridled power that we have lost so many of our fine game animals.

The bow is a far less destructive weapon, and to succeed at all in the chase the bowman must be a double-read forester. The bow is silent, and it sends the arrow with exactly the same power that the bowman's arm puts into it—no more, no less—so it is really his own power that speeds the arrow. There is no question as to which hunter has the right to the game or is responsible for the shot when the arrow is there to tell. The gun stands for little skill, irresistible force supplied from an outside source, overwhelming, unfair odds, and sure death to the victim. The bow, on the other hand, stands for all that is clever and fine in woodcraft; so, no guns or firearms of any kind are allowed in our boy Indian camp.

The Indian's bow was short, because, though less efficient, it was easier to carry than a long one. Yet it did not lack power. It is said that the arrow-head sometimes appeared on the far side of the buffalo it was fired into, and there is a tradition that Wah-ma-tah, a Sioux chief, once shot his arrow through a cow buffalo and killed her calf that was running at the other side.

But the long bow is more effective than the short one. The old English bowmen, the best the world has ever seen, always shot with the long bow.

The finest bows and arrows are those made by the professional makers, but there is no reason why each boy should not make his own.

According to several authorities, the best bow-woods are mulberry, osage-orange, sassafras, Southern cedar, black locust, apple, black walnut, slippery elm, iron-wood, mountain ash, hickory, California yew and hemlock.

Take a perfectly sound, straight, well-seasoned stick five or six feet long (your bow should be about as long as yourself); mark off a five-inch space in the middle for the handle; leave this round and a full inch thick; shave down the rest, flat on one side for the front and round on the other for the back, until it is about one inch wide and three-quarters of an inch thick next the handle, tapering to about one-half that at the ends, which are then "nocked," nicked, or notched as shown (Fig. I.). These notches are for the string which is to be put on presently. Draw the bow now, flat side out, not more than the proper distance, and note carefully which end bends the most; then shave down the other side until it bends evenly. The middle scarcely bends at all. The perfect shape when bent is shown in Fig. XII. Trim the bow down to your strength and finish smoothly with sandpaper and glass. It should be straight when unstrung, and unstrung when not in use. Curved bows are weak affairs. The bow for our boy should require a power of fifteen or twenty pounds (shown on a spring balance) to draw the string twenty-three inches from the bow; not more. The best string is of hemp or linen; it should be about five inches from the middle of the bow when strung (Fig. II.). The notches for the

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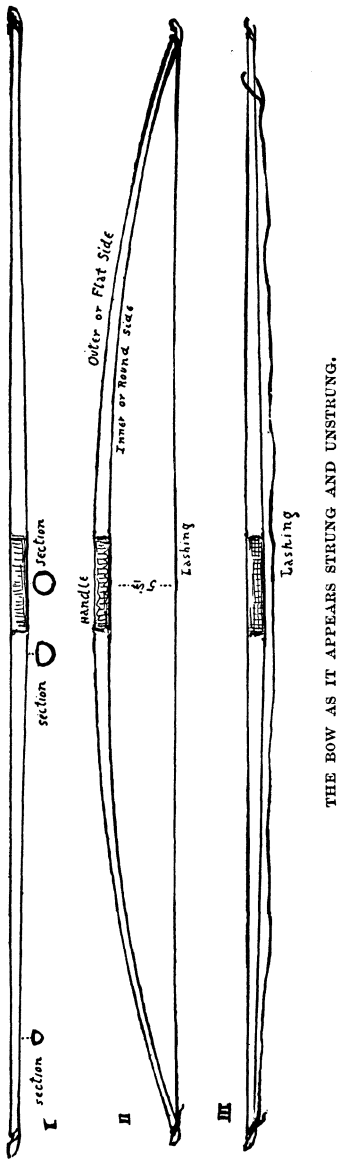
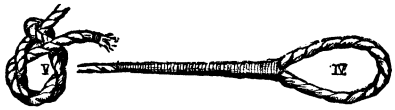
string should be two-thirds the depth of the string. If you have not a bought string, make one of strong, unbleached linen thread twisted together. At one end the string, which is heaviest at the ends, should be fast-knotted to the bow notch (Fig. V.); at the



THE BOW AS IT APPEARS STRUNG AND UNSTRUNG.

other it should have a loop as shown in Fig. IV. In the middle it should be lashed with fine silk and wax for five inches, and the exact place marked where the arrow fits it.

The arrow is more important than the bow. Anyone can make a bow; few can make an arrow, for, as a Seminole Indian expressed it to Maurice Thompson: "Any stick do for bow; good arrow much heap work, ugh!" Hiawatha went all the way to Dakota to see the famous arrow-maker. In England, when the bow was the gun of the



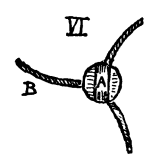
AT ONE END KNOT THE STRING, AND AT THE OTHER HAVE A LOOP.

country, the bow-maker was called a "bowyer," and the arrow-maker a "fletcher" (from the Norman *fleche*, an arrow). So, when men began to use surnames, those who excelled in arrow-making were proud to be called the "Fletchers"; but to make a good bow was not a notable achievement, hence few took "Bowyer" as their name.

The first thing about an arrow is that it must be perfectly straight. "Straight as an arrow" refers to the arrow itself, not to its flight; that is always curved.

The Indians made arrows of reeds and of straight shoots of viburnum or arrow-wood, and of elder; but we make better arrows out of the solid heart-wood of hard pine for target use, and of hickory or ash for hunting. The arrow should be twenty-five inches long, round, and three-eighths of an inch thick, and have three feathers set, as shown in Fig. VI., about an inch from the notch. The feather B, that stands out at right angles to notch A, should always be away from the bow in shooting. This is called the cock-feather, and it is usually marked or coloured in some way to be quickly distinguished.

Turkey and goose wing-feathers are the best that grow in our country for arrow-feathers. The Indians mostly use turkey. With a sharp knife cut a strip of the mid-rib on which is the vane of the feather; make three pieces, each two to three inches long. White men glue these on to the arrow. The Indians leave the mid-rib projecting at each end, and by these lash the feathers without gluing. The lashed feathers stand the weather better than those glued, but do not fly so well. The Indians use sharp flint arrow-heads for war and for big game, but for birds and small game they make arrow-heads with a knob of hard-wood or the knuckle-bone of some small animal. The best arrow-heads for our



END OF ARROW SHOWING NOTCH AND THREE FEATHERS.

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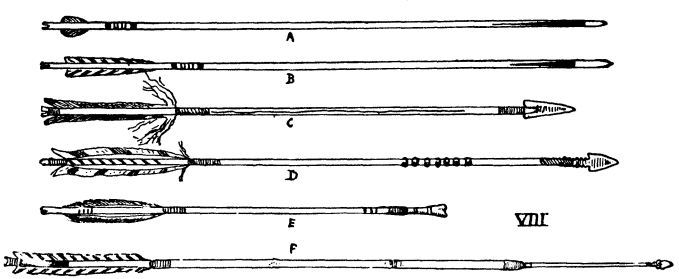
purpose are like the ferrule of an umbrella-top; they receive the end of the shaft into them and keep it from splitting.

One of the best arrows I ever shot with was twenty-eight inches long, five-sixteenths of an inch thick, had a ferrule head, and very small feathers.

The finishing touch of an arrow is "painting" it. This is done for several purposes—first, to preserve it from damp, which would twist the arrow and soften the glue that holds the feathers; second, each hunter paints all his arrows with his mark, so as to know them; third, they are thus made bright-coloured to help in finding them when lost. Some sample arrows are shown in Fig. VIII.

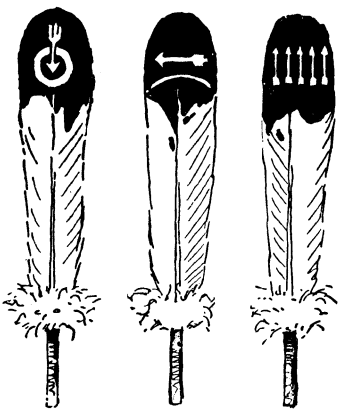
A is my far-flying, steel-pointed bobtail, already spoken of. B is another very good arrow with a horn point. This went even better than A if there were no wind. C is an Omaha war and deer arrow. Both head and feathers are lashed on with sinew. The long tufts of down left on the feathers are to help in finding it again, as they are snow-white and wave in the breeze. The grooves on the shaft are to make the victim bleed more freely and be more easily tracked. D is another Omaha arrow with a peculiar owner's mark of rings carved in the middle. E is a bone-headed bird-shaft made by the Indians of the Mackenzie River. F is a war-arrow made for Mrs. Seton by Geronimo, the famous Apache chief. Its shaft is three joints of a straight cane. The tip is of hard wood, and on that is a fine quartz point; all being lashed together with sinew.

There are four other things required by our archer—a smooth, hard arm-guard, or bracer, usually of hard leather. The Indians who use one make it of wood, grass, or raw-hide. In photographs of famous Indians you may often see this on the left wrist, and will remember that it was there as a protection from the blow of the bow-cord.



SIX SAMPLE ARROWS SHOWING DIFFERENT FEATHERS.

Some archers can shoot with the wrist bent so as to need no guard. The three middle fingers of the right hand also need protection. An old leather glove, with thumb and little finger cut away, will do very well for this, though the ready-made tips at the archery



VII.—FEATHERS FOR COUPS IN ARCHERY.

stores are more convenient. Some archers who practise all their lives can shoot without protecting the fingers.

The bow-case and quiver are important. Any kind of a cover that will keep them from the rain and hang on your back will do, but there are many little things that help to make them handy. When the cover is off, the arrows should project three or four inches, so that they may be more easily drawn out. The Indians often carried very beautiful quivers of buckskin ornamented with quills and beads.

One day out West I saw an Omaha brave with a bow-case and quiver covered with very odd material — a piece of common red and white cotton print. When allowed to examine it, I felt some other material underneath the print. After a little dickering he sold me bow, arrows, quiver and all for a couple of dollars. I then ripped open the print and found my first suspicions confirmed; for underneath, the quiver was of buckskin, beautifully embroidered with red feathers and porcupine quills of deep red and turquoise blue (Fig. IX.). The Indian was as much puzzled by my preference for the quill-work as I was by his for the cotton-print.

The standard target, for men, is four feet

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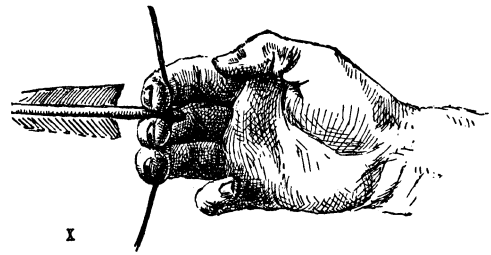
across, with a nine-inch bullseye, and around that four rings, each four and three-quarter inches wide. The bullseye counts nine, the other rings seven, five, three, one. The bought targets are made of straw, but a good target may be made of a box filled with sods, or a bank covered with sacking, on which are painted the usual rings.

Now comes the most important point of all—how to shoot. There are several ways of holding an arrow, but only one good one. Most boys know the ordinary finger and thumb pinch, or grip. This is all very well for a toy bow, but a hunter's bow cannot be drawn that way. No one has strength enough in his fingers for it. The true archer's grip of the arrow is shown in Fig. X. The thumb and little finger have nothing to do with it.



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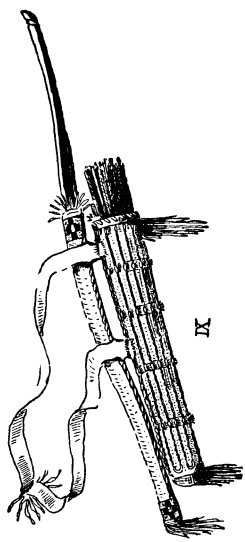
THE TRUE ARCHER'S GRIP.



IX

THE OMAHA'S BOW-CASE AND QUIVER.

As in golf and all such things, there is a right "form." You attend to your end of the arrow's flight, and the other will take care of itself.

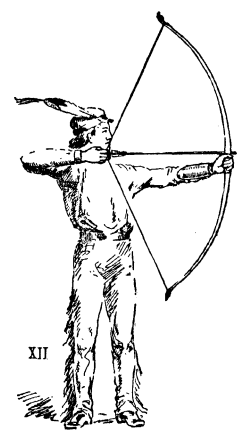
Stand perfectly straight. Plant your feet with the centres of the two heels in line with the target (Fig. XI.). Grasp the bow in the middle with the left hand, and place the arrow on the string at the left side of the bow. Hold the bow plumb, and draw as above till the notch of the arrow is right under your eye, and the head of the arrow back to the bow. The right elbow must be in the same line with the arrow (Fig. XII.). Let go the arrow by straightening the fingers a little, turning the hand outward at the bottom and drawing it back one inch. Always do this in exactly the same way, and your shooting will be even. Your left hand should not move a hair's breadth until the arrow strikes the target.

To begin shooting, put the target very near, within fifteen or twenty yards; but the proper shooting distance, when the archer is in good practice, is fifty yards for a four-foot target and forty yards for a three-foot target. A good shot, shooting twelve arrows at this, should score fifty. When the archer has done it three times in succession—that is, scored 150 in thirty-six shots—it counts coup. For grand coup he should score 225 with thirty-six successive shots.

Long distance, or far shooting, is another test. To send an arrow 150 yards counts coup; 200 yards counts grand coup (Fig. VII.).

CENTRE OF HEELS IN LINE WITH TARGET.

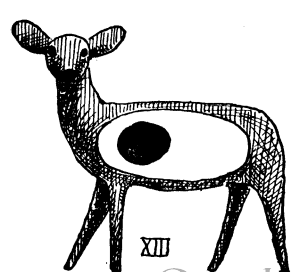
The Indians generally used their bows at short range, so that it was easy to hit the mark. Rapid firing was important. In their archery competitions, therefore, the prize was given to the one who could have the most arrows in the air at once. Their record, according to Catlin, was eight. We reckon coup when we can have five in the air, and grand coup for seven.



XII

THIS IS THE CORRECT POSITION WHEN AIMING.

The most exciting archery game that I ever played is hunting the burlap deer. Make a deer of telegraph wire and excelsior, cased in common burlap. No wood is used, as that breaks the arrows. A large white spot is painted on each side of the deer, and in this, on each shoulder, a black spot, the rest being left burlap colour (Fig. XIII.).



XIII

THE BURLAP DEER.

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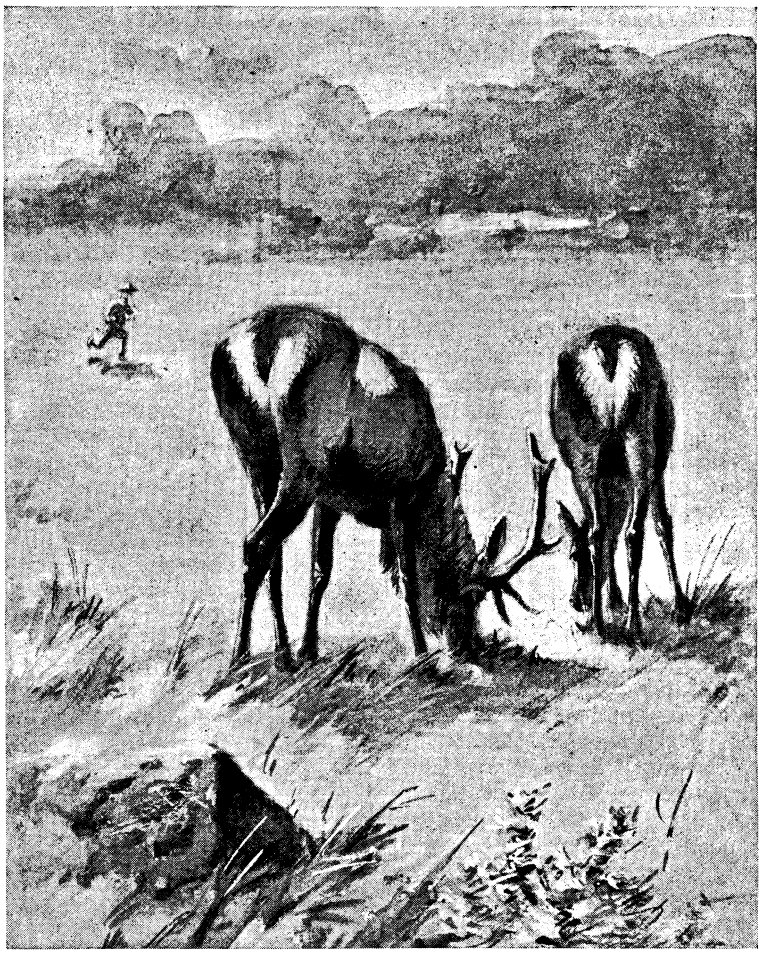


"AS LONG AS THE DEER'S HEADS WERE DOWN GRAZING, I RAN TOWARDS THEM."

It takes three boys to play the game. One, called "the deer-boy," wears a red coat or shirt; the rest have their bows and a given number of arrows each. The deer-boy is allowed one to five minutes, according to the country, to hide the deer. When he comes back into view and shouts "Ready," the hunting begins for the other two. The first one to see the deer counts ten, but he must shoot from that place. If he misses, the other walks up five paces nearer, or aside if he likes, and has a shot. If the second misses, the first goes five paces from the second's standpoint, and shoots; and so on until all arrows are gone or until the deer is shot in the heart—that is, the black spot—which counts ten points. A shot in the white spot—a "body wound"—counts five; a shot in the burlap is a "scratch," and counts one. After once the deer is hit, all the shooting must be done from the spot whence that shot was fired. If at the finish the deer is only "scratched," the deer-boy counts twenty-five.

The rules are usually changed to suit different kinds of country, and there is no end to the amusement that the hunt may provide. It is the sort of sport which wide-awake boys will enjoy thoroughly day after day.

I once made a burlap deer stuffed with hay, but the arrows went right through and out again. Of course, an arrow that does not stick does not count, and to prevent them passing through we padded the deer's sides with papers. The Sunday issue of a large newspaper covered one side under the heart mark; but the shafts bounded off this as though it had been armour, and gave a very good idea of how tough a Sunday paper

can be, and also showed, I suppose, that after all, newspaper protection is a very good thing to have.

There is no more danger in this than in any other form of target-shooting if the deer-boy wears red and always comes out into plain sight of the shooters. The deer should never be put on a high or rocky place, and is all the better if kept short-legged and hidden low, for then the shooters see what is beyond. If a bowman shoots at something other than the deer, he is fined fifty points.

It may be well also to assure the mother that this pursuit of a dummy, so far from developing the boy's hunting instinct, is invariably found to work the other way. Experience shows that, like the rag raisin given to the weanling, it furnishes a harmless vent for a natural craving and at length ends all wish for the real thing.

"FREEZING."

FREEZING seems a good subject for the winter, only I do not mean that kind of freeze. I mean the kind that Molly Cottontail taught Rag to do; the kind you must learn to do if you wish to see much of the wild animals about your home. "Freezing" is standing perfectly still, as still as though frozen—because, when the wind prevents them from smelling, it is movement more than anything else that betrays the animals to each other.

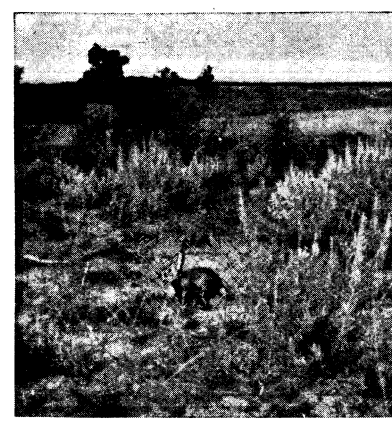
If you see or hear something in the woods, remain perfectly still, and you will learn far more than if you went blundering forward to find out.

Nearly all animals practise "freezing" to an extent that will surprise you when you come to look for it. If you wish to see a good example at home, drag something that looks like a mouse at the end of a string, and watch the cat. In a moment she will turn rigid while she takes her observation. Another case, even more remarkable, is that which produced the pointer and setter dogs. A clever sportsman observed that certain dogs "froze" for an unusually long time when they discovered their prey, and taking advantage of this, he selected those that paused longest, and from them raised a breed which "froze" or "pointed" until they were told to go on and put the game up.

You have often heard a tree frog croaking in some small tree, and have gone there expecting to find him, and though you knew just about where to look, you could not find him, no matter how you searched. The reason was that he knew how to "freeze." As soon as he saw or heard you coming, he ceased blowing out his throat and croaking; then, lying flat on the bark that he is so like in colour, he defied you to find him.

Another good example that I have often seen is offered by the common bittern. When he finds himself cornered in the marsh, he stands as straight and still as a post. His striped brown feathers help him to look like a bunch of dry reeds, and there he stays till the danger is past, or till he is sure he cannot escape by that trick.

One of the most unexpected cases of "freezing" I ever saw was given me by my own plough-oxen in Manitoba some years ago. They were turned out at noon each day to graze for two hours in a rough, brushy pasture field. I soon found that they would hide in the thickest bushes as soon as they saw me coming, and give a great deal of trouble and cause much loss of time before they could be found and brought back to work. They became so clever at hiding that I put a bell on the leader, and for a few days this worked well. He would hide as usual, but either his jaws or the turning of his head would cause a little "tang" from the bell, which led me to his hiding-place. But in a few days he learned how to keep the bell quiet. The old fellow, on seeing me

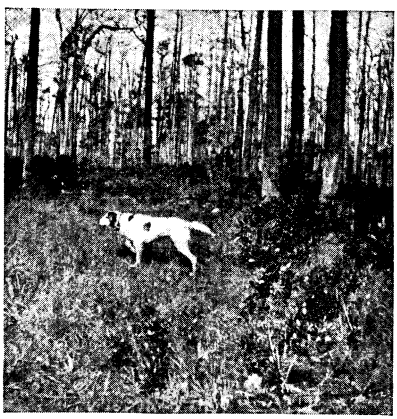


MOLLY COTTONTAIL IS A GOOD "FREEZER."

afar, or probably guessing that I would soon come, would lie down in a thick place and lay his head flat down, like a young deer; thus the bell was underneath and silent. I walked several hours one day before I found him, and then the discovery was due to his

shining horns, which stood up through low bushes.

But one day, when I went after the oxen, I neither saw nor heard them. I walked about in the pasture, which was a good many acres; went into all the likely bushes, and



A SETTER "FREEZING."

climbed a tree to look for those gleaming white horns. But no, nothing was in sight. I had searched here and there for two hours, and was standing on a high stump looking again, when the thought struck me that they must be hiding somewhere near; the red ox was probably watching me closely, and carefully holding the bell under. So I let off an awful yell: "Get up out of this, you red rascal! Hi—hi—hi!"—and instantly in a thicket close to me there was a great uproar, and out dashed my two truant oxen. They had been hiding and watching me, and now, as I hoped, they supposed that they were discovered, the game was up, and off they ran. From this time I was careful to keep my over-cunning helpers each at the end of a long rope when they grazed.

One day, as I went through the woods, I came on a deer; he was walking about sixty yards away, but he saw me just as I saw him. At the same moment we both "froze" and stood gazing, each waiting for the other to make the first move.

I waited three or four minutes at least, but he did not stir. Then it occurred to me to time him. I very slowly slid my hand up to my watch, and then stood as before, the deer still watching me. One minute—two minutes—five minutes went by, and still the deer did not move. I began to wonder if I had not made a mistake, after all, and watched a stump that had somewhat the form of a deer. Then I thought: "No, I saw him walk there." Six minutes—eight minutes—ten minutes passed, and still the deer stood.

"It is not possible," I said to myself; "no deer would stand like that for ten minutes. And yet there he is. He was plainly a deer when he went there." I waited another minute; still no move. "I'll give him five minutes more, and if there is no move, then I shall know I have been fooled by a stump." Eleven and a half minutes, not counting the time before my watch was out, and there was a change, for it was a deer that had been so intently watching me all the time; and it so happened that he now decided that he had been fooled by a stump. He shifted his pose, turned to graze, and I had won the game of "freeze." I brought my camera slowly up and snapped it, but the light was too poor to get a picture. The deer now saw me move, and he bounded away.

Many years ago, when I used to carry a rifle instead of a camera, I was passing through a thick swamp in the Upper Assiniboin, looking for something for dinner. As I came out on a glade, I heard the "Quit, quit, quit!" of an old partridge, warning her young ones to hide. I heard a number of "whirrs," for the young were now well grown, and I caught a fleeting glimpse of flying birds. All went from sight except one, the old one. She stood on a fallen log and uttered once or twice the warning note; then all was still.

The young did not need the mother now, and I did; so I raised my rifle and fired without any effect. Then I sent another ball whirring over her head, and the only result was to convince myself that I had been firing at an old knot. At the same time, I heard the warning that an old partridge utters to her brood when she means: "Hurry up now; I can't keep this up much longer."

I walked up within fifteen yards of this deceptive knot that I had fired at twice, and not until then did the mother partridge cease playing her perilous game of "freeze," and dash away in the opposite direction from that taken by the young ones. She had simply played the old game, and done it so well as to mislead me. It was dangerous play, but my hasty shooting had been her safety.

There is another way of "freezing" that hunters often turn to account. The last time I tried this was a few years ago, when I lived in France. I was walking with a friend on the outskirts of the Forest of

Fontainebleau, and we came to a wide, open plain, in the middle of which were two red deer feeding. They are very shy, and would have run had they seen us, but we were in cover.

I said to my friend: "Do you want to see me walk up within one hundred feet of those deer?"

He replied: "Yes, I should like very much to see you, for it is not possible."

"You stay here," said I, "and you will see me do it. They will not run till I get within one hundred feet. I will then shake my handkerchief, and they will go, but not till then."

I left my friend in the bushes and set out. As long as the deer's heads were down grazing, I ran towards them, keeping very low, but particularly watching for their heads to go up, for a grazing deer raises his head and looks around for enemies every few bites. While their heads were up, I remained perfectly still; no matter what position I chanced to be in, I kept that pose like a statue. The deer no doubt saw me, for I was standing up most of the time; but as they did not see me move, they concluded it was all right and went on grazing. Then I closed in as before, stopping when the heads were up. Each time I got nearer and became more cautious, keeping closer to the ground. But at last I was within seventy-five feet of them. I could not have got much nearer, for they were now puzzling no little over the "stump" which had suddenly appeared so near them. So I stood up and waved my handkerchief. The deer snorted and dashed off in a way that proved to my friend that my trick was a good one.

Molly Cottontail is one of the best of "freezers." Whenever she does not know what to do, she does nothing, obeying the old Western rule: "Never rush when you are rattled." Now, Molly is a very nervous creature. Any loud, sharp noise is liable to upset her, and feeling herself unnerved she is very apt to stop and simply "freeze." Keep this in mind when next you meet a cottontail, and get a photograph.

Last July I tried it myself. I was camped with a lot of Sioux Indians on the banks of the Cheyenne River. They had their families with them, and about sundown one of the boys ran into the teepee for a gun, and then fired into the grass. His little brother gave a war-whoop that their "pa" might have been proud of, then rushed forward and held up a fat cottontail, kicking her last kick. Another, a small cottontail, was found not far away, and half-a-dozen young savages armed with sticks crawled up, then suddenly let them fly. Bunny was hit, knocked over, and before he could recover, a dog had him.

I had been some distance away. On hearing the uproar, I came back towards my own camp-fire; and as I did so, my Indian guide pointed to a cottontail twenty feet away gazing towards the boys. The Indian picked up a stick of firewood.

The boys saw him, and knowing that another rabbit was there, they came running. Now, I did not wish them to kill poor Molly, but I knew I could not stop them by saying that, so I said: "Hold on till I make a photo!" Some of them understood; at any rate, my guide did, and all held back as I crawled towards the rabbit. She took alarm and was bounding away when I gave a shrill whistle which turned her into a "frozen" statue. Then I came near and snapped the camera. The Indian boys now closed in and were going to throw, but I cried out: "Hold on; not yet; I want another!" So I chased Bunny twenty or thirty yards, then gave another shrill whistle, and got another picture. Again I had to hold the boys back by wanting another picture. Five times I did this, taking five pictures, and all the while steering Molly towards a great pile of drift-logs by the river. I had now used up all my films.

The boys were getting impatient. So I addressed the cottontail solemnly and gently: "Bunny, I have done my best for you. I cannot hold these savages any longer. You see that pile of logs over there? Well, Bunny, you have just five seconds to get into that wood-pile. Now git!" and I shooed and clapped my hands, and all the little savages yelled and hurled their clubs, the dogs came bounding, and Molly fairly dusted the earth.

"Go it, Molly!"

"Go it, dogs!"

"Ki-yi, Injuns!"

The clubs flew and rattled around her; but Molly put in ten feet to the hop and ten hops to the second almost, and before the chase was well begun it was over; her cotton tuft disappeared under a log; she was safe in the pile of wood.

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AYESHA

THE RETURN OF "SHE."

By H. RIDER HAGGARD.*

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE YIELDING OF AYESHA.

WHEN I had satisfied myself, Leo was still at his meal, for loss of blood, or the effects of the tremendous nerve tonic which Ayesha ordered to be administered to him, had made him ravenous.

I watched his face and became aware of a curious change in it—no immediate change, indeed, but one, I think, that had come upon him gradually, although I only fully appreciated it now, after our short separation. In addition to the thinness of which I have spoken, his handsome countenance had grown more ethereal; his eyes were full of the shadows of things that were to come.

His aspect pained me, I knew not why. It was no longer that of the Leo with whom I was familiar—the deep-chested, mighty-limbed, jovial, upright traveller, hunter, and fighting-man, who had chanced to love and be loved of a spiritual power incarnated in a mould of perfect womanhood and armed with all the might of Nature's self. These things were still present indeed, but the man was changed, and I felt sure that this change came from Ayesha, since the look upon his face had become exceeding like to that which often hovered upon hers at rest.

She also was watching him, with speculative, dreamy eyes, till presently, as some thought swept through her, I saw those eyes blaze up, and the red blood pour to cheek and brow. Yes, the mighty Ayesha whose dead, slain for him, lay strewn by the thousand on yonder plain, blushed and trembled like a maiden at her first lover's kiss.

Leo rose from the table. "I would that I had been with thee in the fray," he said.

"At the drift there was fighting," she answered; "afterwards none. My ministers of Fire, Earth and Air smote, no more; I waked them from their sleep, and at my command they smote for thee and saved thee."

"Many lives to take for one man's safety," Leo said solemnly, as though the thought pained him.

"Had they been millions and not thousands, I would have spent them every one. On my head be their deaths, not on thine. Or, rather, on hers," and she pointed to the dead Atene. "Yes, on hers who made this war. At least she should thank me, who have sent so royal a host to guard her through the darkness."

"Yet it is terrible," said Leo, "to think of thee, beloved, red to the hair with slaughter."

"What reck I?" she answered with a splendid pride. "Let their blood suffice to wash the stain of thy blood from off these cruel hands that once did murder thee."

"Who am I, that I should blame thee?" Leo went on, as though arguing with himself—"I who but yesterday killed two men—to save myself from treachery."

"Speak not of it!" she exclaimed in cold rage. "I saw the place; and thou knowest how I swore that a hundred lives should pay for every drop of that dear blood of thine; and I, who lie not, have kept the oath. Look now on that man who stands yonder struck by my will to stone, dead yet living, and say again what was he about to do to thee when I entered here?"

"To take vengeance on me for the doom of his queen and of her armies," answered Leo; "and, Ayesha, how knowest thou that a Power higher than thine own will not demand it yet?"

As he spoke, a pale shadow flickered on Leo's face, such a shadow as might fall from Death's advancing wing, and in the fixed eyes of the Shaman there shone a stony smile.

For a moment terror seemed to take Ayesha, then it was gone as quickly as it came.

"Nay," she said. "I ordain that it shall not be, and, save One who listeth not, what power reigns in this wide earth that dare defy my will?"

So she spoke, and as her words of awful pride—for they were very awful—rang round that stone-built chamber, a vision came to me—Holly.

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I saw illimitable space peopled with shining suns, and sunk in the infinite void above them one vast Countenance clad in a calm so terrific that at its aspect my spirit sank to nothingness. Yes, and I knew that this was Destiny enthroned above the spheres. Those lips moved, and obedient worlds rushed up on their course. They moved again, and these rolling chariots of the heavens were turned or stayed, appeared or disappeared. I knew also that against this calm Majesty the being, woman or spirit, at my side had dared to hurl her passion and her strength. My soul reeled. I was afraid.

The dread phantasm passed, and when my mind cleared again, Ayesha was speaking in new, triumphant tones.

"Nay, nay!" she cried. "Past is the night of dread; dawns the day of victory! Look!" and she pointed through the window-places shattered by the hurricane, to the flaming town beneath, whence rose one continual wail of misery, the wail of women mourning their countless slain while the fire roared through their homes like some unchained and rejoicing demon. "Look, Leo, on the smoke of the first sacrifice that I offer to thy royal state, and listen to its music. Perchance thou deemst it naught. Why, then, I'll give thee others. Thou lovest war. Good! we will go down to war, and the rebellious cities of the earth shall be the torches of our march."

She paused a moment, her delicate nostrils quivering, and her face alight with the prescience of ungarnered splendours; then like a swooping swallow flitted to where, by dead Atene, the gold circlet fallen from the Khania's hair lay upon the floor.

She stooped, lifted it, and coming to Leo, held it high above his head. Slowly she let her hand fall until the glittering coronet rested for an instant on his brow. Then she spoke, in her glorious voice that rolled out rich and low, a very pæan of triumph and of power.

"By this poor, earthly symbol I create thee King of Earth; yea, in its round for thee is gathered all her rule! Be thou its king, and mine!"

Again the coronet was held aloft, again it sank, and again she said, or rather chanted—

"With this unbroken ring, token of eternity, I swear to thee the boon of endless days! Endure thou while the world endures, and be its lord, and mine!"

A third time the coronet touched his brow.

"By this golden round I do endow thee with Wisdom's perfect gold uncountable, that is the talisman whereat all Nature's secret paths shall open to thy feet! Victorious, victorious, tread thou her wondrous ways with me, till from her topmost peak at last she wafts us to our immortal throne whereof the columns twain are Life and Death!"

Then Ayesha cast away the crown, and lo! it fell upon the breast of the lost Atene and rested there.

"Art content with these gifts of mine, my lord?" she cried.

Leo looked at her sadly and shook his head.

"What more wilt thou, then? Ask it, and I swear it shall be thine."

"Thou swearest; but wilt thou keep the oath?"

"Aye, by myself I swear; by myself and by the Strength that bred me. If it be aught that I can grant—then if I refuse it to thee, may such destruction fall upon me as will satisfy even Atene's watching soul!"

I heard, and I think that another heard also—at least, once more the stony smile shone in the eyes of the Shaman.

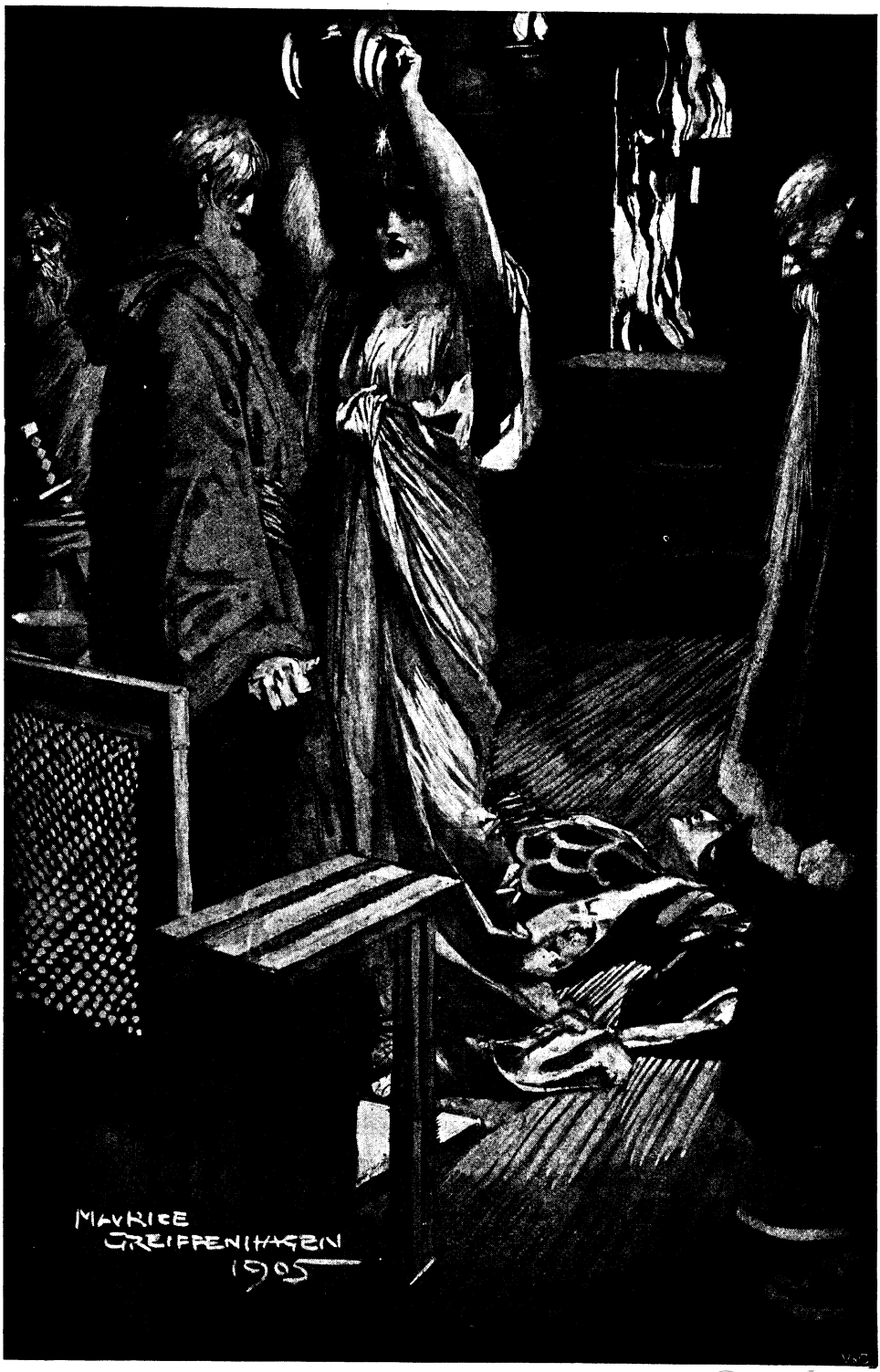
"I ask of thee nothing that thou canst not give. Ayesha, I ask of thee thyself—not at some distant time when I have been bathed in a mysterious fire, but now, this night."

She shrank back from him a little, as though dismayed.

"Surely," she said slowly, "I am like that foolish philosopher who, walking abroad to read the destinies of nations in the stars, fell down a pitfall dug by idle children, and broke his bones and perished there. Never did I guess that with all these glories stretched before thee like mountain-top on glittering mountain-top, making a stairway for thy mortal feet to the very dome of heaven, thou wouldst still clutch at thy native earth and ask of it—but the common boon of woman's love.

"Oh, Leo! I thought that thy soul was set upon nobler aims, that thou wouldst pray me for wider powers, for a more vast dominion; that as though they were but yonder fallen door of wood and iron, I should break for thee the bars of Hades, and, like the Eurydice of old fable, draw thee living down the steeps of Death, or throne thee midst the fires of the furthest sun to watch its subject worlds at play.

"Or I thought that thou wouldst bid me reveal what no woman ever told, the bitter, naked truth—all my sins and sorrows, all the wandering fancies of my fickle thought;



"'By this poor, earthly symbol I create thee King of Earth,'"

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even what thou knowest not and perchance ne'er shalt know—*who I am and whence I came*, and how to thy charmed eyes I seemed to change from foul to fair, and what is the purpose of my love for thee, and what the meaning of that tale of an angry goddess—who never was except in dreams.

"I thought — nay, no matter what I thought, save that thou wert far otherwise than thou art, my Leo, and in so high a moment that thou wouldst seek to pass the mystic gates my glory can throw wide and with me tread an air supernal to the hidden heart of things. Yet thy prayer is but the same that the whole world whispers beneath the silent moon, in the palace and the cottage, among the snows and on the burning desert's waste: 'Oh! my love, thy lips, thy lips! Oh! my love, be mine, now, now, beneath the moon, beneath the moon!'

"Leo, I thought better, higher, of thee."

"Mayhap, Ayesha, thou wouldst have thought worse of me had I been content with thy suns and constellations and spiritual gifts and dominations, that I neither desire nor understand.

"If I had said to thee: 'Be thou my angel, not my wife; divide the ocean, that I may walk its bed; pierce the firmament and show me how grow the stars; tell me the origins of being and of death, and instruct me in their issues; give up the races of mankind to my sword, and the wealth of all the earth to fill my treasuries. Teach me also how to drive the hurricane as thou canst do, and to bend the laws of Nature to my purpose: on earth make me half a god, as thou art.'

"But, Ayesha, I am no god; I am a man, and as a man I seek the woman whom I love. Oh! divest thyself of all these wrappings of thy power—that power which strews thy path with dead and keeps me apart from thee. If only for one little hour, forget the ambition that gnaws unceasingly at thy soul; I say forget thy greatness and be a woman and—my wife."

She made no answer, only looked at him and shook her head, causing her glorious hair to ripple like water beneath a gentle breeze.

"Thou deniest me," he went on with gathering strength; "and that thou canst not do, that thou mayest not do, for Ayesha, thou hast sworn, and I demand the fulfilment of thine oath.

"Hark thou. I refuse thy gifts; I will have none of thy rule, who ask no Pharaoh's throne, and wish to do good to men, and not to kill them—that the world may profit. I will not go to Kôr, nor be bathed in the breath of Life. I will leave thee and cross the mountains, or perish on them; nor with all thy strength canst thou hold me to thy side, who, indeed, needest me not. No longer will I endure this daily torment, the torment of thy presence and thy sweet words; thy loving looks, thy promises for next year, next year, next year. So keep thine oath or let me begone."

Still Ayesha stood silent, only now her head drooped and her breast began to heave. Then Leo stepped forward; he seized her in his arms and kissed her. She broke from his embrace, I know not how, for though unreturned it was close enough, and again stood before him, but at a little distance.

"Did I not warn Holly," she whispered with a sigh, "to bid thee beware lest I should catch thy human fire? Man, I say to thee, it begins to smoulder in my heart, and should it grow to flame——"

"Why, then," he answered laughing, "we will be happy for a little while."

"Aye, Leo, but how long? Why, wert thou sole lord of this loveliness of mine and not set above their harming, night and day a hundred jealous daggers would seek thy heart and—find it."

"How long, Ayesha? A lifetime, a year, a month, a minute—I neither know nor care, and while thou art true to me I fear no stabs of envy."

"Is it so? Wilt take the risk? I can promise thee nothing. Thou mightest—yes, in this way or in that, thou mightest—die."

"And if I die, what then? Shall we be separated?"

"Nay, nay, Leo, that is not possible. We never can be severed, of this I am sure; it is sworn to me. But then through other lives and other spheres, higher lives and higher spheres mayhap, our fates must force a painful path to their last goal of union."

"Why, then, I take the hazard, Ayesha. Shall the life that I can risk to slay a leopard or a lion, in the sport of an idle day, be too great a price to offer for the splendours of thy breast? Thine oath! Ayesha, I claim thine oath."

* * * * *

Then it was that in Ayesha there began the most mysterious and thrilling of her many changes. Yet how to describe it I know not, unless it be by simile.

Once in Thibet we were imprisoned for months by snows that stretched down from

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the mountain slopes into the valleys, and oh, how weary did we grow of those arid, aching fields of purest white! At length rain set in, and blinding mists in which it was not safe to wander, that made the dark nights darker yet.

So it was until there came a morning, when, seeing the sun shine, we went to our door and looked out. Behold a miracle! Gone were the snows that choked the valley, and in the place of them appeared vivid, springing grass, starred everywhere with flowers, and murmuring brooks, and birds that sang and nested in the willows. Gone was the frowning sky, and all the blue firmament seemed one tender smile. Gone were the austerities of winter, with its harsh winds, and in their place Spring, companioned by her zephyrs, glided down the vale singing her song of love and life.

* * * * *

There in this high chamber, in the presence of the living and the dead, while the last act of the great tragedy unrolled itself before me, looking on Ayesha, that forgotten scene sprang into my mind. For on her face just such a change had come. Hitherto, with all her loveliness, the heart of Ayesha had seemed like that winter mountain wrapped in its unapproachable snow, and before her pure brow and icy self-command, aspirations sank abashed and desire died.

She swore she loved, and her love fulfilled itself in death and many a mysterious way. Yet it was hard to believe that this passion of hers was more than a spoken part, for how can the star seek the moth, although the moth may seek the star? Though the man may worship the goddess, for all her smiles divine, how can the goddess love the man?

But now everything was altered! Look! Ayesha grew human; I could see her heart beat beneath her robes, and hear her breath come in soft, sweet sobs, while o'er her upturned face and in her alluring eyes there spread itself that look which is born of love alone. Radiant and more radiant did she seem to grow, sweeter and more sweet, no longer the veiled hermit of the Caves, no longer the Oracle of the Sanctuary, no longer the Valkyrie of the battleplain, but only the loveliest and most happy bride that ever gladdened a husband's eyes.

She spoke, and it was of little things, for thus she proclaimed the conquest of herself.

"Fie!" she said, showing her white robes torn with spears and stained by the dust and due of war; "Fie, my lord, what marriage garments are these in which at last I come to thee, who would have been adorned in regal gems and raiment befitting to my state and thine?"

"I seek the woman, not her garment," said Leo, his burning eyes fixed upon her face.

"Thou seekest the woman. Ah! there it lies. Tell me, Leo, am I woman or spirit? Say that I am woman, for now the prophecy of this dead Atene lies heavy on my soul—Atene, who said that mortal and immortal may not mate."

"Thou must be woman, or thou wouldst not have tormented me as thou hast done these many weeks."

"I thank thee for the comfort of thy words. Yet, was it *woman* whose breath wrought destruction upon yonder plain? Was it to a *woman* that Blast and Lightning bowed and said: 'We are here: Command us, we obey'? Did that dead thing" (and she pointed to the shattered door) "break inward at a *woman's* will? Or could a *woman* charm this man to stone?

"Oh, Leo! would that I were woman! I tell thee that I'd lay all my grandeur down, a wedding offering at thy feet, could I be sure that for one short year I should be naught but *woman* and—thy happy wife.

"Thou sayest that I did torment thee, but it is I who have known torment, I who desired to yield and dared not. Aye, I tell thee, Leo, were I not sure that thy little stream of life is draining dry into the great ocean of my life, drawn thither as the sea draws its rivers, or as the sun draws mists, e'en now I would not yield. But I know, for my wisdom tells it me, ere ever we could reach the shores of Libya, the ill work would be done, and thou dead of thine own longing—thou dead and I widowed who never was a wife.

"Therefore see! like lost Atene I take the dice and cast them, not knowing how they shall fall. Not knowing how they shall fall, for good or ill I cast," and she made a wild motion as of some desperate gamester throwing his last throw.

"So," Ayesha went on, "the thing is done and the number summed for aye, though it be hidden from my sight. I have made an end of doubts and fears, and come death, come life, I'll meet it bravely.

"Say, how shall we be wed? I have it. Holly here must join our hands; who else? He that ever was our guide shall give me unto thee, and thee to me. This burning

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city is our altar, the dead and living are our witnesses on earth and heaven. In place of rites and ceremonials, for this first time I lay my lips on thine, and when 'tis done, for music I'll sing thee a nuptial chant of love such as mortal poet has not written nor have mortal lovers heard.

"Come, Holly, do now thy part, and give this maiden to this man."

* * * * *

Like one in a dream I obeyed her, and took Ayesha's outstretched hand and Leo's. As I held them thus—I tell the truth—it was as though some fire rushed through my veins from her to him, shaking and shattering me with swift waves of burning and unearthly bliss. With the fire, too, came glorious visions and sounds of mighty music, and a sense as though my brain, filled with overflowing life, must burst asunder beneath its weight.

I joined their hands—I know not how; I blessed them—I know not in what words. Then I reeled back against the wall and watched.

This is what I saw.

With an abandonment and a passion so splendid and intense that it seemed more than human, with a murmured cry of "Husband!" Ayesha cast her arms about her lover's neck, and drawing down his head to hers, so that the gold hair was mingled with her raven locks, she kissed him on the lips.

Thus they clung a little while; and as they clung, the gentle diadem of light from her brow spread to his brow also, and through the white wrappings of her robe became visible her perfect shape shining with faint fire. With a little happy laugh she left him, saying—

"Thus, Leo Vincey, oh! thus for the second time do I give myself to thee, and with this flesh and spirit all I swore to thee, there in the dim Caves of Kôr, and here in the Palace of Kaloon. Know thou this—come what may, never, never more shall we be separate who are ordained one. Whilst thou livest, I live at thy side; and when thou diest, if die thou must, I'll follow thee through worlds and firmaments, nor shall all the doors of heaven or hell avail against my love. Where thou goest, thither I will go. When thou sleepest, with thee will I sleep, and it is my voice that thou shalt hear murmuring through the dreams of life and death; my voice that shall summon thee to awaken in the last hour of everlasting dawn, when all this night of misery hath furled her wings for aye.

"Listen now while I sing to thee, and hear that song aright, for in its melody at length thou shalt learn the truth, which unwed I might not tell to thee. Thou shalt learn who and what *I* am, and who and what *thou* art, and of the high purposes of our love, and this dead woman's hate, and of all that I have hid from thee in veiled, bewildering words and visions.

"Listen, then, my love and lord, to the burden of the Song of Fate."

She ceased speaking and gazed heavenwards with a rapt look, as though she waited for some inspiration to fall upon her, and never, never—not even in the fires of Kôr—had Ayesha seemed so divine as she did now in this moment of the ripe harvest of her love.

My eyes wandered from her to Leo, who stood before her pale and still—still as the deathlike figure of the Shaman—still as the Khania's icy shape which stared upwards from the ground. What was passing in his mind, I wondered, that he could remain thus insensible while in all her might and awful beauty this proud being worshipped him?

Hark! she began to sing in a voice so rich and perfect that its honeyed notes seemed to cloy my blood and stop my breath.

The world was not, was not, and in the womb of Silence
Slept the souls of men.
Yet I was, and thou——

Suddenly Ayesha stopped, and I felt rather than saw the horror on her face.

Look! Leo swayed to and fro as though the stones beneath him were but a rocking boat. To and fro he swayed, stretched out his blind arms to clasp her—then suddenly fell backwards and lay still.

Oh! what a shriek was that she gave! Surely it must have wakened the very corpses upon the plain. Surely it must have echoed in the stars. One shriek only—then throbbing silence.

* * * * *

I sprang to him, and there, withered in Ayesha's kiss, slain by the fire of her love, Leo lay dead—lay dead upon the breast of dead Atene!

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE PASSING OF AYESHA.

I HEARD Ayesha say presently—and the words struck me as dreadful in their hopeless

"With a murmured cry of 'Husband!' Ayesha cast her arms about her lover's neck."

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acceptance of a doom against which even she had no strength to struggle—

"It seems that my lord has left me for awhile; I must hasten to my lord afar."

After that I do not quite know what happened. I had lost the man who was all in all to me—friend and child in one—and I was crushed as I had never been before. It seemed so sad that I, old and outworn, should still live on, whilst he, in the flower of his age, snatched from joy and greatness such as no man hath known, lay thus asleep.

I think that, by an afterthought, Ayesha and Oros tried to restore him—tried without result, for here her powers were of no avail. Indeed, my conviction is that although some lingering life still kept him on his feet, Leo had really died at the moment of her embrace, since when I looked at him before he fell, his face was that of a dead man.

Yes, I believe that last speech of hers, although she knew it not, was addressed to his spirit, for in her burning kiss his flesh had perished.

* * * * *

When at length I recovered myself a little, it was to hear Ayesha in a cold, calm voice—her face I could not see, for she had veiled herself—commanding certain priests who had been summoned to "bear away the body of that accursed woman, and bury her as befits her rank." Even then I bethought me, I remember, of the tale of Jehu and Jezebel.

Leo, looking strangely calm and happy, lay now upon a couch, the arms folded on his breast. When the priests had tramped away, bearing their royal burden, Ayesha, who sat by his body brooding, seemed to awake, for she rose and said—

"I need a messenger, and for no common journey, since he must search out the habitations of the Shades"; and she turned herself towards Oros and appeared to look at him.

Now for the first time I saw that priest change countenance a little, for the eternal smile, of which even this scene had not quite rid it, left his face, and he grew pale and trembled.

"Thou art afraid," she said contemptuously. "Be at rest, Oros; I will not send one who is afraid. Holly, wilt thou go for me—and him?"

"Aye," I answered. "I am weary of life, and desire no other end. Only let it be swift and painless."

She mused awhile, then said—

"Nay, thy time is not yet; thou still hast work to do. Endure, my Holly—'tis only for a breath."

Then she looked at the Shaman, the man turned to stone, who all this while had stood there as a statue stands, and cried—

"Awake!"

Instantly he seemed to thaw into life, his limbs relaxed, his breast heaved; he was as he had always been—ancient, gnarled, malevolent.

"I hear thee, mistress," he said, bowing as a man bows to the power that he hates.

"Thou seest, Simbri," and she waved her hand.

"I see. Things have befallen as Atene and I foretold, have they not? 'Ere long the corpse of a new-crowned Khan of Kaloon," and he pointed to the gold circlet that Ayesha had set on Leo's brow, "'will lie upon the brink of the Pit of Flame'—as I foretold." An evil smile crept into his eyes, and he went on—

"Hadst thou not smote me dumb, I who watched could have warned thee that they would so befall; but, great mistress, it pleased thee to smite me dumb. And so it seems, O Hes, that thou hast overshot thyself and liest broken at the foot of that pinnacle which step by step thou hast climbed for more than two thousand weary years. See what thou hast bought at the price of countless lives, that now, before the Throne of Judgment, bring accusations against thy powers misused, and cry out for justice on thy head," and he looked at the dead form of Leo.

"I sorrow for them; yet, Simbri, they were well spent," Ayesha answered reflectively, "who, by their forewritten doom—as it was decreed—held thy knife from falling, and thus won me my husband. Aye, and I am happy—happier than such blind bats as thou can see or guess. For know that now with him I have re-wed my wandering soul divorced by sin from me, and that of our marriage kiss which burned his life away there shall still be born to us children of Forgiveness and eternal Grace, and all things that are pure and fair.

"Look thou, Simbri, I will honour thee. Thou shalt be my messenger, and beware! beware, I say, how thou dost fulfil thine office, since of every syllable thou must render an account.

"Go thou down the dark paths of Death, and, since even my thought may not reach to where he sleeps to-night, search out my lord, and say to him that the feet of his spouse Ayesha are following fast. Bid him

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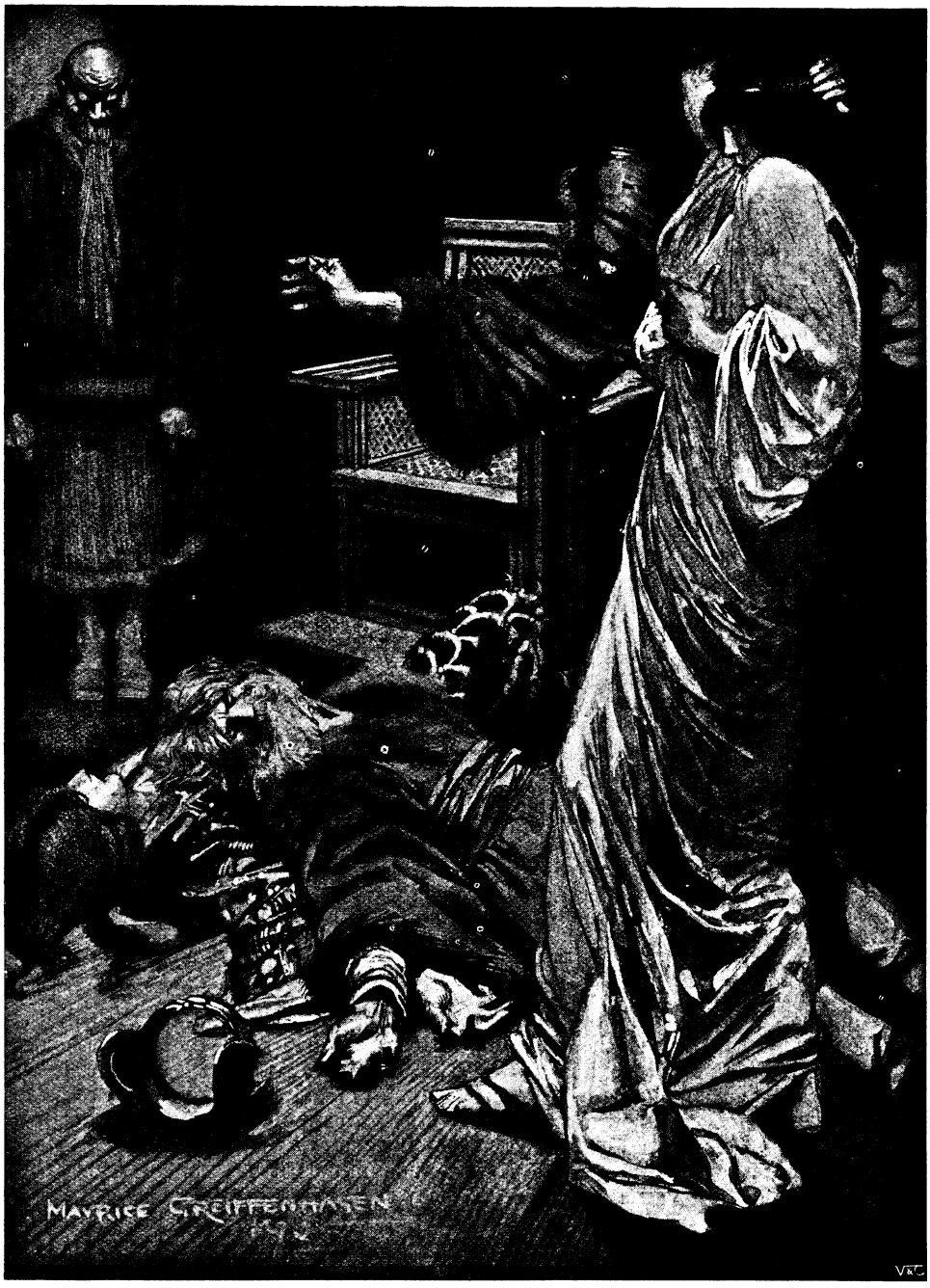

"And there Leo lay dead, upon the breast of dead Atene!"

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have no fear for me who, by this last sorrow, have atoned my crimes and am in his embrace regenerate. Tell him that thus it was appointed, and thus is best, since now for him also mortality is left behind and true life begins. Command him that he await me in the Gate of Death. Thou hearest!"

"I hear, O Queen, Mighty-from-of-Old."

"One thing more. Say to Atene that I forgive her. Her heart was high, and greatly did she play her part. There in the Gates we will balance our account. Thou hearest?"

"I hear, O Eternal Star that hath conquered Night."

"Then, man, *begone!*"

As the word left Ayesha's lips, Simbri leapt from the floor, grasping at the air as though he would clutch his own departing soul, staggered back against the board where Leo and I had eaten, overthrowing it, and amid a ruin of gold and silver vessels, fell down and died.

She looked at him, then said to me—

"See, though he ever hated me, this magician, who has known Ayesha from the first, did homage to my ancient majesty at last, when lies and defiance would serve his end no more. No longer now do I hear the name that his dead mistress gave to me. The 'Star-that-hath-fallen' in his lips and in very truth is become the 'Star-which-hath-burst-the-bonds-of-Night,' and, re-arisen, shines for ever—shines with its twin immortal, to set no more—my Holly. Well, he is gone, and ere now those that serve me in the Under-world—dost remember? thou sawest their captains in the Sanctuary—bend the head at great Ayesha's word and make her place ready near her spouse.

"But, oh, what folly has been mine! When even here my wrath can show such power, how could I hope that my lord would outlive the fires of my love? Still it was better so, for he sought not the pomp I would have given him, nor desired the death of men. Yet such pomp must have been his portion in this poor shadow of a world, and the steps that encircle a usurper's throne are ever slippery with blood.

"Thou art weary, my Holly; go rest thee. To-morrow night we journey to the Mountain, there to celebrate these obsequies."

* * * * *

I crept into the room adjoining—it had been Simbri's—and laid me down upon his bed, but to sleep I was not able. Its door was open, and in the light of the burning city that shone through the casements I could see Ayesha watching by her dead. Hour after hour she watched, her head resting on her hand—silent, stirless. She wept not—no sigh escaped her; only watched as a tender woman watches a slumbering babe that she knows will awake at dawn.

Her face was unveiled, and I perceived that it had greatly changed. All pride and anger were departed from it; it was grown soft, wistful, yet full of confidence and quietness. For a while I could not think of what it reminded me, till suddenly I remembered. Now it was like—indeed, the counterpart almost—of the holy and majestic semblance of the statue of the Mother in the Sanctuary. Yes, with just such a look of love and power as that Mother cast upon her frightened child new-risen from its dream of death, did Ayesha gaze upon her dead, while her parted lips also seemed to whisper "some tale of hope, sure and immortal."

At length she rose and came into my chamber.

"Thou thinkest me fallen, and dost grieve for me, my Holly," she said in a gentle voice, "knowing my fears lest some such fate should overtake my lord."

"Aye, Ayesha, I grieve for thee as for myself."

"Spare, then, thy pity, Holly, since although the human part of me would have kept him on the earth, now my spirit doth rejoice that for a while he has burst his mortal bonds. For many an age, although I knew it not, in my proud defiance of the Universal Law, I have fought against his true weal and mine. Thrice have I and the angel wrestled, matching strength with strength, and thrice has he conquered me. Yet as he bore away his prize this night he whispered wisdom in my ear. This was his message: That in death is love's home, in death its strength; that from the charnel-house of life this love springs again glorified and pure, to reign a conqueror for ever. Therefore I wipe away my tears and go to join him whom we have lost, there where he awaits me, as it is granted to me that I may do.

"But I am selfish, and forgot. Thou needest rest. Sleep, friend; I bid thee sleep."

And I slept.

When I awoke, it was day, and through the window-place I saw the rain that the people of Kaloon had so long desired, falling in one straight sheet. I saw also that

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"'Then, man, *begone!*'"

Ayesha, seated by the shrouded form of Leo, was giving orders to her priests and captains and to some nobles, who had survived the slaughter of Kaloon, as to the new government of the land. Then I slept again.

* * * * *

It was evening, and Ayesha stood at my bedside.

"All is prepared," she said. "Arise and ride with me."

So we went, escorted by a thousand cavalry, for the rest stayed to occupy, or perchance to plunder, the land of Kaloon. In front the body of Leo was borne by relays of priests, and behind it rode the veiled Ayesha, I at her side.

Strange was the contrast between this departure and our arrival.

Then the rushing squadrons, the elements that raved, the perpetual sheen of lightnings seen through the swinging curtains of the hail; the voices of despair from an army

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rolled in blood beneath the chariot wheels of thunder.

Now the white-draped corpse, the slow-pacing horses, the riders with their spears reversed, and on either side, seen in that melancholy moonlight, the women of Kaloon burying their innumerable dead.

And Ayesha herself, yesterday a Valkyrie crested with the star of flame, to-day but a bereaved woman humbly following her husband to the tomb.

Yet how they feared her! Some widow standing on the grave mould she had dug, pointed, as we passed, to the body of Leo, uttering bitter words which I could not catch. Thereon her companions flung themselves upon her, and, felling her with fist and spade, prostrated themselves upon the ground, throwing dust on their hair in token of their submission to the Queen of Death.

Ayesha saw them, and said to me, with something of her ancient fire and pride—

"I tread the plain of Kaloon no more, yet, as a parting gift, have I read this high-stomached people a lesson that they needed long. Not for many a generation, O Holly, will they dare to lift spear against the College of Hes and its subject Tribes."

* * * * *

Again it was night, and where once lay that of the Khan, the man whom he had killed, flanked by the burning pillars the bier of Leo stood in the inmost Sanctuary before the statue of the Mother, whose gentle, unchanging eye seemed to search his quiet face.

On her throne sat the veiled Hesea, giving commands to her priests and priestesses.

* * * * *

"I am weary," she said, "and it may be that I leave you for a while to rest—beyond the mountains. A year, or a thousand years—I cannot say. If so, let Papave, with Oros as her counsellor and husband, and their seed, hold my place till I return again.

"Priests and priestesses of the College of Hes, over new territories have I held my hand; take them as an heritage from me, and rule them well and gently. Henceforth let the Hesea of the Mountain be also the Khania of Kaloon.

"Priests and priestesses of our ancient faith, learn to look through its rites and tokens, outward and visible, to the in-forming Spirit. If Hes the goddess never ruled on earth, still pitying Nature rules. If the name of Isis never rang through the courts of heaven, still in heaven, with all love fulfilled, nursing her human children on her breast, dwells the mighty Motherhood whereof this statue is the symbol, that Motherhood which bore us, and, unforgetting, faithful, will receive us at the end.

"For of the bread of bitterness we shall not always eat, of the water of tears we shall not always drink. Beyond the night the royal suns ride on; ever the rainbow shines around the rain. Though they slip from our clutching hands like melted snow, the lives we lose shall yet be found immortal, and from the burnt-out fires of our human hopes will spring a heavenly star."

She paused and waved her hand as though to dismiss them, then added, by an after-thought, pointing to myself—

"This man is my beloved friend and guest. Let him be yours also. It is my will that you tend and guard him here, and when the snows have melted and summer is at hand, that you fashion a way for him through the gulf and bring him across the mountains by which he came, till you leave him in safety. Hear and forget not, for be sure that to me you will give account of him."

* * * * *

The night drew towards the dawn, and we stood upon the peak above the gulf of fire, four of us only—Ayesha and I, and Oros and Papave. For the bearers had laid down the body of Leo upon its edge and gone their way. The curtain of flame flared in front of us, its crest bent over like a billow in the gale, and to leeward, one by one, floated the torn-off clouds and pinnacles of fire. By the dead Leo knelt Ayesha, gazing at that icy, smiling face, but speaking no single word. At length she rose and said—

"Darkness draws near, my Holly, that deep darkness which foreruns the glory of the dawn. Now fare thee well for one little hour. When thou art about to die, but not before, call me, and I will come to thee. Stir not and speak not till all be done, lest when I am no longer here to be thy guard some Presence should pass on and slay thee.

"Think not that I am conquered, for now my name is Victory! Think not that Ayesha's strength is spent or her tale is done, for of it thou readest but a single page. Think not even that I am to-day that thing of sin and pride, the Ayesha thou didst adore and fear, I who in my lord's love and sacrifice have again conceived my soul. For know that now once more, as at the beginning, his soul and mine are *one*."

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"Two glorious shapes sweeping upward."

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She thought awhile and added—

"Friend, take this sceptre in memory of me; but beware how thou usest it, save at the last to summon me, for it has virtues," and she gave me the jewelled sistrum that she bore; then said—

"So kiss his brow, stand back, and be still."

* * * * *

Now, as once before, the darkness gathered on the pit, and presently, although I heard no prayer, though now no mighty music broke upon the silence, through that darkness, beating up the gale, came the two-winged flame, and hovered where Ayesha stood.

It appeared, it vanished, and one by one the long minutes crept away until the first spear of dawn lit upon the point of rock.

Lo! it was empty, utterly empty and lonesome. Gone was the corse of Leo, and gone, too, was Ayesha the imperial, the divine.

Whither had she gone? I know not. But this I know, that as the light returned and the broad sheet of flame flared out to meet it, I seemed to see two glorious shapes sweeping upward on its bosom, and the faces that they wore were those of Leo and of Ayesha.

Often and often during the weary months that followed, whilst I wandered through the temple or amid the winter snows upon the Mountain-side, did I seek to solve this question: Whither had She gone? I asked it of my heart; I asked it of the skies; I asked it of the spirit of Leo which often was so near to me.

But no sure answer ever came, nor will I hazard one. As mystery wrapped Ayesha's origin and lives—for the truth of these things I never learned—so did mystery wrap her deaths—or, rather, her departings, for I cannot think her dead. Surely she still is, if not on earth, then in some other sphere?

So I believe; and when my own hour comes—and it draws near swiftly—I shall know whether I believe in vain, or whether she will appear to be my guide as, with her last words, she swore that she would do. Then, too, I shall learn what she was about to reveal to Leo when he died, the purposes of their being and of their love.

So I can wait in patience, who must not wait for long, though my heart is broken and I am desolate.

* * * * *

Oros and all the priests were very good to me. Indeed, even had it been their wish, they would have feared to be otherwise, who remembered and were sure that in some time to come they must render an account of this matter to their dread Queen. By way of return, I helped them as I was best able to draw up a scheme for the government of the conquered country of Kaloon, and with my advice upon many other questions.

And so at length the long months wore away, till at the approach of summer the snows melted. Then I said that I must be gone. They gave me of their treasures in precious stones, lest I should need money for my faring, since the gold of which I had such plenty was, of course, too heavy to be carried by one man alone. They led me across the plains of Kaloon, where now the husbandmen, those that were left of them, ploughed the land and scattered seed, and so on to its city. But amidst those blackened ruins, over which Atene's palace still frowned unharmed, I would not enter, for to me it was, and always must remain, a home of death. So I camped outside the walls by the river, just where Leo and I had landed after that poor, mad Khan set us free—or, rather, loosed us, to be hunted by his death-hounds.

Next day we took boat and rowed up the river, past the place where we had seen Atene's cousin murdered, till we came to the Gate-house. Here once again I slept—or, rather, did not sleep.

On the following morning I went down into the ravine and found, to my surprise, that the rapid torrent—shallow enough now—had been roughly bridged, and that, in preparation for my coming, rude but sufficient ladders were built on the face of the opposing precipice. At the foot of these I bade farewell to Oros, who at our parting smiled benignantly as on the day we met.

"We have seen strange things together," I said to him, not knowing what else to say.

"Very strange," he answered.

"At least, friend Oros," I went on awkwardly enough, "events have shaped themselves to your advantage, for you inherit a royal mantle."

"I wrap myself in a mantle of borrowed royalty," he answered with precision, "of which doubtless one day I shall be stripped."

"You mean that the great Hesea is not dead?"

"I mean that Hes never dies. She changes; that is all. As the wind blows now hence, now hither, so she comes and goes; and who can tell at what spot upon

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the earth, or beyond it, for a while that wind lies sleeping? But at sunset or at dawn, at noon or at midnight, it will begin to blow again, and then woe to those who stand across its path!

"Remember the dead heaped upon the plains of Kaloon. Remember the departing of the Shaman Simbri with his message, and the words that she spoke then. Remember the passing of the Hesea from the Mountain-point. Stranger from the West, surely as to-morrow's sun must rise, as she went, so she will return again, and in my borrowed garment I await her advent."

"I also await her advent," I answered, and thus we parted.

* * * * *

Accompanied by fifty picked men bearing provisions and arms, I climbed the ladders easily enough, and now that I had food and shelter, crossed the mountains without mishap. They even escorted me through the desert beyond, till one night we camped within sight of the gigantic Buddha that sits before the monastery, gazing eternally across the sands and snows.

When I awoke next morning, the priests were gone. So I took up my pack and pursued my journey alone, and walking slowly came at sunset to the distant lamasery. At its door an ancient figure, wrapped in a tattered cloak, was sitting, engaged apparently in contemplation of the skies. It was our old friend Kou-en. Adjusting his horn spectacles on his nose, he looked at me.

"I was awaiting you, brother of the Monastery called the World," he said in a voice measured, very ineffectually, to conceal his evident delight. "Have you grown hungry there, that you return to this poor place?"

"Aye, most excellent Kou-en," I answered, "hungry for rest."

"It shall be yours for all the days of this incarnation. But say, where is the other brother?"

"Dead," I answered.

"And therefore re-born elsewhere. Well, doubtless we shall meet him later on. Come, eat, and afterwards tell me your story."

So I ate, and that night I told him all. Kou-en listened with respectful attention, but the tale, strange as it might seem to most people, excited no particular wonder in his mind. Indeed, he explained it to me at such length, by aid of some marvellous theory of reincarnations, that at last I began to doze.

"At least," I said sleepily, "it would seem that we are all winning merit on the Everlasting Plane," for I thought that favourite catchword would please him.

"Yes, brother of the Monastery called the World," Kou-en answered in a severe voice, "doubtless you are all winning merit; but, if I may venture to say so, you are winning it very slowly, especially the woman—or the sorceress—or the mighty evil spirit—whose names I understand you to tell me are She, Hes, and Ayesha upon earth, and in *Avitchi*, Star-that-hath-Fallen——"

(*Here Mr. Holly's manuscript ends, its outer sheets having been burnt when he threw it on to the fire at his house in Cumberland.*)

THE END.

BRACKEN.

SPRING makes the frame from which it spreads amain,
Summer its grace sees and his heart grows warm,
Autumn its fair tint mimics, and its form
Winter depicts upon the window-pane!

CHARLES INNISS BOWEN.

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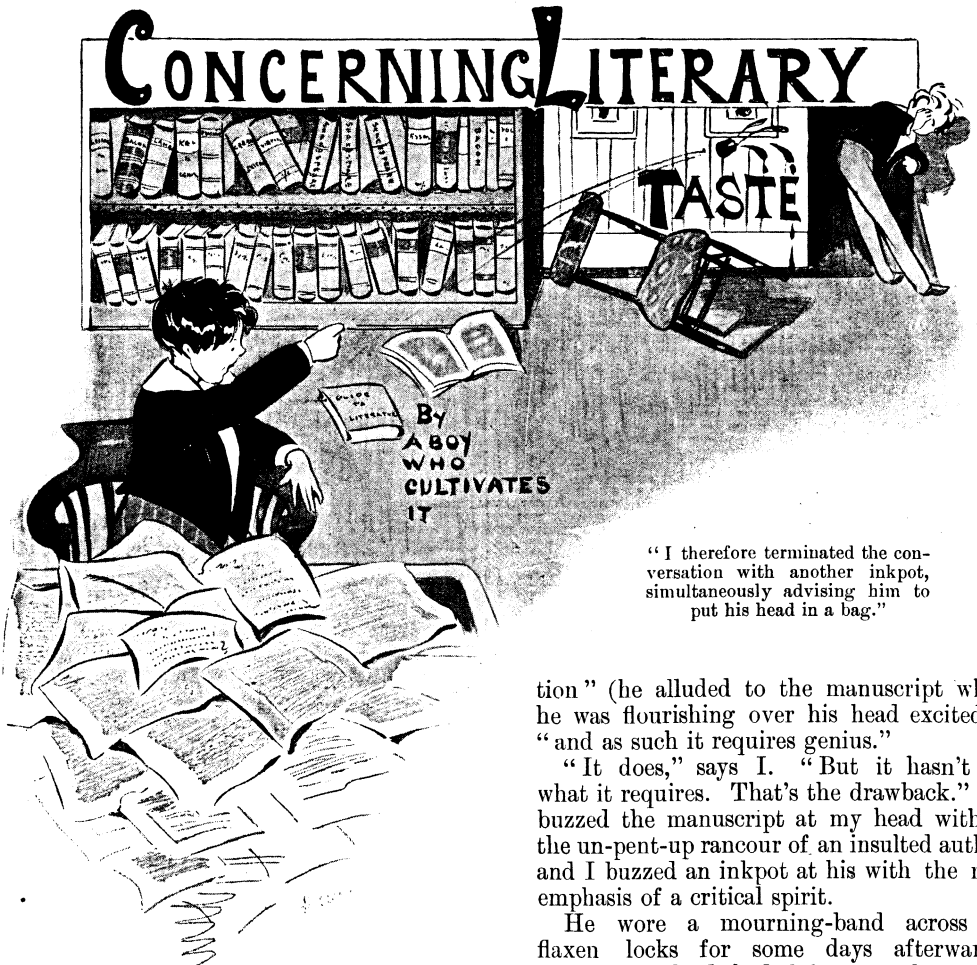

"I therefore terminated the conversation with another inkpot, simultaneously advising him to put his head in a bag."

FEW people understand how thoroughly I go in for literature; and it is this want of understanding that prevents some idiots from taking my opinion seriously when I offer it.

When I tell you that I have read "Antony and Cleopatra," by W. Shakespeare (or F. Bacon —authorship disputed), and G. B. Shaw's "Cæsar and Cleopatra" side by side, making a minute comparison of their merits, you may perhaps form some idea of the depth of my researches, and enter into my feelings in the matter of Browne, who refused to consider me a competent critic when I told him that the story he wrote last term was not up to publication mark.

He said: "Beastly rotter!" And he said: "Conceited ass!" And he said: "What do *you* know? You only write articles about true things. Any fool can stick down what really happens. This is a work of imagination" (he alluded to the manuscript which he was flourishing over his head excitedly), "and as such it requires genius."

"It does," says I. "But it hasn't got what it requires. That's the drawback." He buzzed the manuscript at my head with all the un-pent-up rancour of an insulted author; and I buzzed an inkpot at his with the mild emphasis of a critical spirit.

He wore a mourning-band across his flaxen locks for some days afterwards; but, although I had left a mark on the outside of his head, I had made no impression on its interior, which, I fear, is a very dark place.

This is the way Browne's story opens. I take the trouble to transcribe the first chapter lest anyone should imagine me to be moved by prejudice—a vice which I abhor. It is called—

THE UNGRATEFUL SON.

A very old lady was sitting by her window on a summer evening. Her hair was whiter than the driven snow, but the intelligent expression of her face showed that her faculties were still unimpaired. She held some fine work in her hands, for although she had reached the advanced age of forty years, her sight was equal to threading a needle without glasses. Ever and anon she glanced up from the delicate cambric and let her eyes dwell upon the blooming flower-beds (Browne *says* that "blooming" here means only rich in blos-

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som), through which she expected presently to see the postman wending his way. Nor was she disappointed. He wended exactly as the cuckoo-clock on the chimney-piece struck seven; and, being an old retainer, he took the liberty of handing her through the open window the single missive which he bore.

It was addressed in an unformed, boyish hand, and at a glance she recognised the writing of Tom Chudleigh, the adored son of her old age. He was but twelve years old, yet steeped in the vices of selfishness, ingratitude, and riotous living. The letter contained no account of his work at school, no assurances of love for his absent relatives, no inquiries for his aged mother's rheumatism. "There was" (as the song says) "absoballylutely nothing in it" but the following heartless lines—

"DEAR MOTHER,—
"Some more jam, please.
"Yr. fex. son, TOM."

The gentle soul lifted her plain sewing and wiped her eyes with it. She was so overcome by emotion that she had not time to reach her handkerchief. "Jam!" she murmured. "Jam! I might have known it. Does he ever write to me unless he has a request to make affecting the pleasure of his Little Mary? But, nevertheless, he shall have jam. I would stew my old bones in a preserving-kettle rather than refuse him."

She gathered up her work and went as hastily as her age and infirmities would permit, to give an order to the cook, her moist eyes dropping a tear on the crumpled letter, while with the other hand she grasped a gold-headed walking-stick to support her tottering steps.

* * *

That's the first chapter, and I hope you admire it as much as I did. I pointed out its obvious defects to Browne gently and considerately, with none of the bitterness employed by that sort of critic who, I am told, is traditionally supposed to be a disappointed author—which I am not. I was really very kind to Browne. I said—

"Look here, my dear fellow, you're simply wasting your time. Take a friend's advice and

"Ever and anon she glanced up from the delicate cambric and let her eyes dwell upon the blooming flower-beds."

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devote it henceforth to Latin grammar and conic sections. You were not born to succeed in literature; and, while it is certain that you won't get biffed for failing in it, there is no saying what may happen if you neglect your studies."

I meant well. I have heard it said by a person whose opinion I respect, that no spectacle is more lamentable than that presented by the hopelessly mediocre writer, and I merely wished to save Browne from the awful fate of making such a spectacle of himself. But he couldn't see it in that light, and retorted with the contumelious epithets already recorded. ("Contumelious" is a fine and expressive word, and I don't think I have ever used it before.) He even went so far as to say I didn't know good from bad—meaning, of course, in literature. He wouldn't have thought of trusting me to choose a rotten apple and leave a sound one for him.

I said: "My dear Browne, don't make a fool of yourself. Correct taste in literature is a matter of fact, not a matter of opinion." (I had heard this, too—or something like it—said by the person alluded to above.) "How can you pretend to possess it, when you have never even studied the English classics?"

He said he had read "Eric, or Little by Little," and "The Channings." Also he had perused part of "Jack Sheppard" on the sly.

He evidently expected me to be impressed.

I smiled; and I confess that I tried to do so in an irritating manner.

I murmured: "'Poor thing!' I said to it, 'poor thing! How came you to be thus?'"

Then I inquired in a tone that I knew would madden him: "Have you an exhaustive acquaintance with the works of Shakespeare?"

He got very red and said something imbecile about lambs' tails. I fancied that he used the words as one might have said "Skittles!"

"Perhaps," I said, willing to make concessions, "you call him Bacon. The author is disputed, and we are all entitled to believe what we like pending further evidence. The present question is not who wrote the plays, but whether you have read them."

But the idiot only continued to jabber about

"She gathered up her work and went as hastily as her age and infirmities would permit, to give an order to the cook."

lambs' tails, which he declared in a blustering way to be "just as good." I suppose he must have meant that they were just as good to eat as bacon. It sounds improbable, but I can't account for his remarks in any other way. The main thing was, he had convinced me that he was *not* acquainted with Shakespeare (or Bacon); and consequently I didn't think it worth while to talk to him any longer. I therefore terminated the conversation with another inkpot, simultaneously advising him to put his head in a bag.

But it is seldom that purely disinterested advice is taken; and I shouldn't be in the least surprised to hear at any time that Browne had submitted his finished work to a publisher.

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SHROVE-TUESDAY FOOTBALL IN THE STREETS OF DORKING.

CURIOUS SURVIVALS OF ANCIENT CUSTOMS.

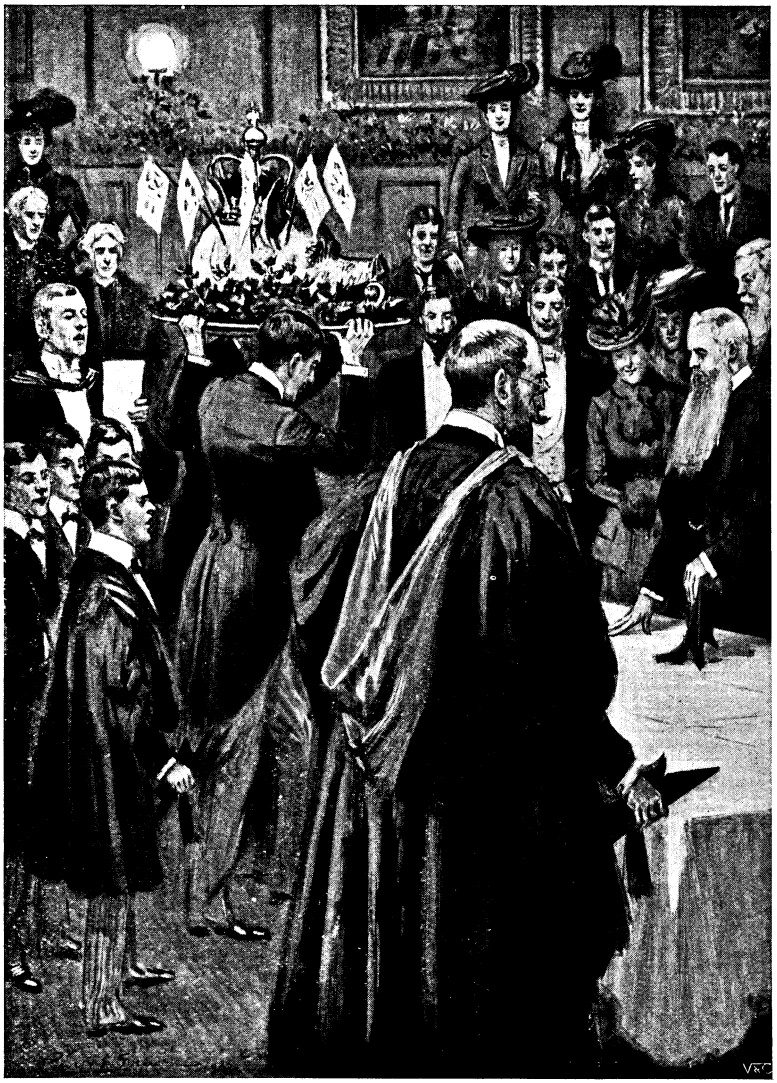
BY EUSTACE WALKER.

IN a previous article on this subject, which by no means exhausted even its more pictorial possibilities, it was suggested how, as the result of the duplicated dates of many of the Feasts of the Pagan and the Christian calendars, the actual origin of a number of curious observances which have belonged, and do yet belong, to special seasons, is so interwoven with apocryphal legends, by the shuttles of Truth and Fable, as to be now difficult to distinguish. We have here collected a further series of illustrations of curious survivals which are interesting because research into the why and wherefore of our national ritual of quaint ceremonies reveals how deep down into the fabric of Time these paradoxical patterns are pressed.

The period of year of the Pagan Saturnalia being identical with that of our Christmas, we have precedent for asserting that from the licence of the first much has been absorbed in the holiday customs of the last.

During the Saturnalia, men who were slaves for the rest of the year enjoyed freedom; and it stood out as a time of universal brotherhood, in which each man claimed and enjoyed the right to pass his time according to the promptings of his own inclination. Liberty, equality, brotherhood then reigned, and this general good-fellowship, this abandonment of caste, this extinction of class prerogatives have all their parallel in the liberalities of our Boxing Day and the Christian doctrine of good-will towards men.

Customs are the antiquities of a people, but these, necessarily, as the religious character of nations change, the better to suit the particular environment in which they are retained or appropriated, become modified; and this modification is the growth of time.



BRINGING IN THE BOAR'S HEAD AT THE CHRISTMAS DINNER AT QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.

Certainly the origin of our festivities is rooted in the customs of races whose imagination was more vivid than is that of the people of our own age.

The dignity with which we treat the Boar's Head, for instance, is but a survival of the honour which was paid to it by the Druids, who, killing a boar at the Winter Solstice, were in the habit of offering its head, in sacrifice, to Freya, the goddess of Peace and Plenty; and the lemon, still used in its decoration, is an old Norse symbol of Plenty. Several canticles have been composed in honour of the Boar's Head—one is as follows:—

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Tydyngs good y thynke to telle;
The Borys hede that we brynge here,
Betokeneth a prince without Pere;
Y's borne this day to bye y dere
Nowell.
A Bore ys a souverayn beste,
And acceptab(l)e in every feaste;
So mote thys lorde be to moste and leaste,
Nowell.

But the second is more modern in sentiment, and has a jovial note—

The Boar's head in hands bring I,
With garlands gay and rosemary;
I praye you all singe merrily,
Qui estis in convivio.

In mediæval England it was customary to commence all Christmas feasts by the solemn ceremony of bringing in the boar's head as the initial dish. The master-cook carried it, preceded by trumpeters and other musicians, and followed by huntsmen with boar-spears and falchions, and (this reads as an anti-climax) pages carrying mustard; an anti-climax, for, in Epistemon's vision of "the damned great," was not Xerxes described as a crier of mustard?

In the ceremonial of bringing in the boar's head at the Christmas dinner at Queen's College, it is now the Provost and Fellows who precede its entrance.

There is a local legend to explain the continuance of the custom at Oxford. Some five hundred years ago, so the story runs, a student, wandering near Shotover Hill, in deep study of Aristotle, was attacked by a wild boar. Having no other means of

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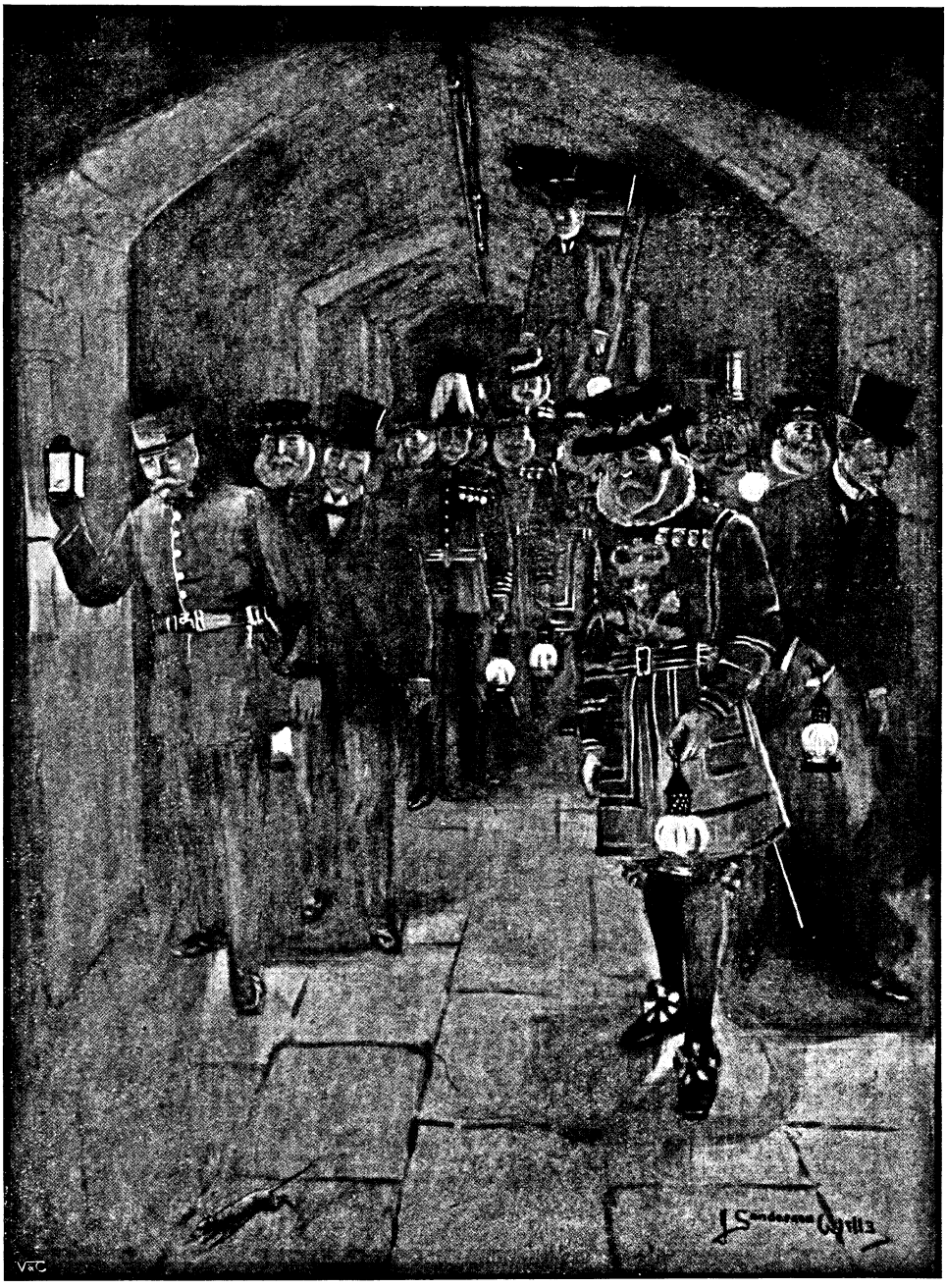

THE ANNUAL INSPECTION OF THE VAULTS UNDER THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT BEFORE THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

defence, he pushed the Aristotle into the boar's throat. The sage choking the savage, the student was enabled to carry back its head in triumph to the town.

Please to remember the Fifth of November,
Gunpowder treason and plot,

is droned by the boys who perambulate our streets in masks, and it has taken the place of the quatrain formerly in use—

Now boys with
Squibs and crackers play;
And bonfires' blaze
Turns night to day,

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Photo by [*Burrow, Camborne.*

THE "KNILL" COMMEMORATION AT ST. IVES.

which, however, is still illustrated with activity at Lewes.

When Lord Mounteagle, on receiving the celebrated anonymous letter on the 4th November, 1604, visited the cellars underneath the House of Lords, he established a precedent; and each year, for three hundred years, the search for miscreants has gone on under the supervision of the superintendent of the House of Lords and a party of Beefeaters, but a second Guy Fawkes has never yet been discovered.

The custom, which is still observed in certain parts of Ireland, of Shooting the Wren on St. Stephen's Day, appears to be somewhat obscure in its origin, but apparently rests on an old mediæval legend, according to which, as our Lord went towards Gethsemane, on the day upon which he was betrayed, Judas—who was amongst the other disciples who were following Him—threw down corn in the path, in order that those who desired to arrest Him might know which way He had gone. The robin, seeing intention in the scattered corn, picked up the grain, thus baffling the pursuers, till a wren, flying in front of them, shrieked: "The Lord passed this way! The Lord passed this way!" The guards, following the bird, found Christ in the garden.

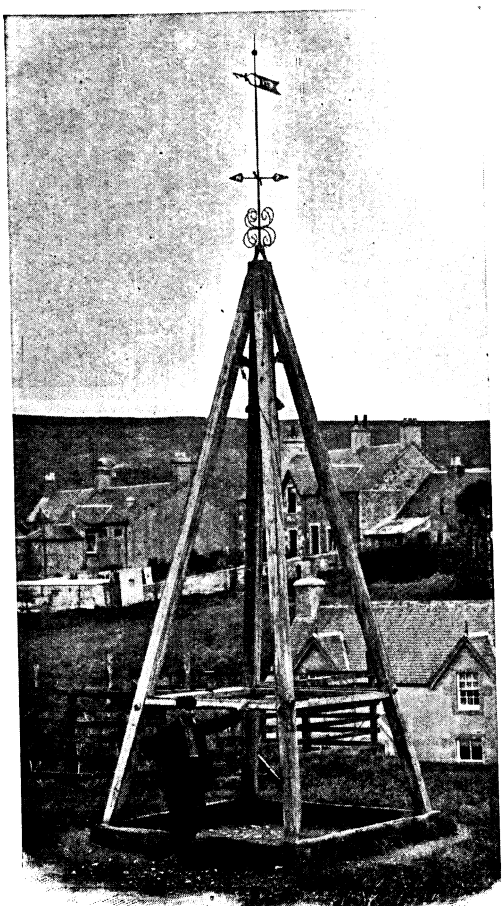
To the primitive mind the whole unseen world was full of spirits, good and bad, of varying aspects, capable of propitiation; and thoughts of angels who ride upon the clanging bells and gather up the passing souls to transport them into Bliss, are still not far from the imaginations of many of us as we hear the solemn resonance of the intermittent toll which we have been taught to consider as but the mournful intimation of an individual death.

Bells, from all time, appear to have existed, and the tune of civilised life is, as it were, still set to their music.

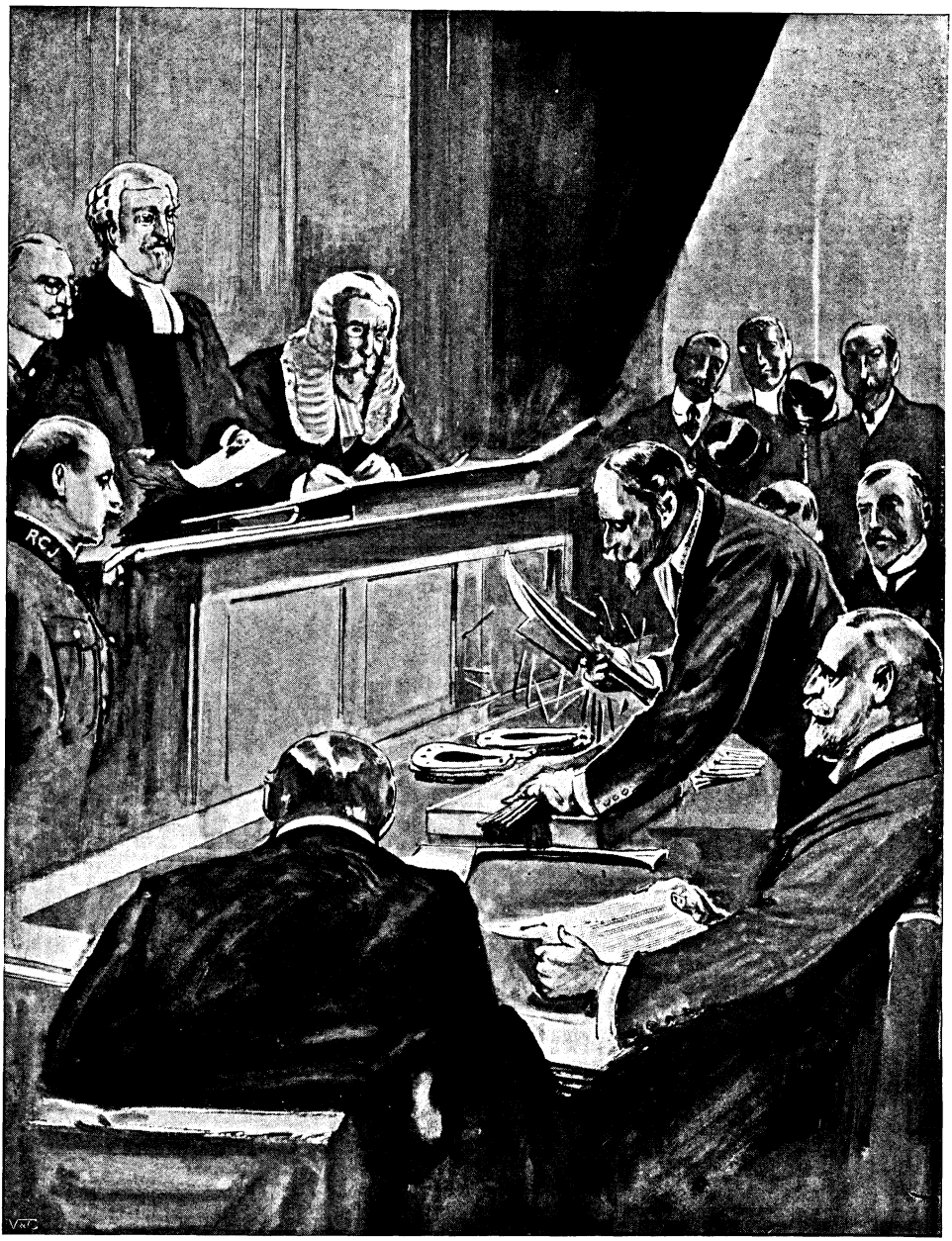
"Oyez!" ("Hear, ye!"), though banished from our modern London, is to be heard in the provinces.

December is still ushered in at Colchester by the ringing of a big bell, and by the town crier perambulating the streets just after midnight, reciting—

Colde December has come inne;
Poor men's clothes are very thinne;
Trees are barre; the birds are mute;
Hot pot and toaste will well suit.
God save ye King!



A CURFEW BELL STILL IN USE AT LEADHILLS VILLAGE.



THE CITY'S QUIT-RENT SERVICE: HORSESHOES, NAILS, FAGGOTS, BILLHOOK AND HATCHET FOR THE CROWN.

And the Curfew is in use in Leadhills village. In Durham its ringing is the signal for the closing of the College gates, whilst in Cheshire and Yorkshire its note warns farmers to lock up their cattle for the night. Contrary to the signification of its name, "couvre feu," it is rung at four a.m. at Stowe, but at Tamworth it does not rouse the inhabitants till the more sensible hour of six. At Waltham-in-the-Wolds a grateful farmer, who was lost in the snow, and found, through the sound of a bell, his way home, left a field in perpetual endowment, for the bell to be rung at five a.m.

"Of all sounds of all bells, the most solemn and most touching is the peal which

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rings out the Old Year," says Charles Lamb.

Ring out the old,
Ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells
Across the snow.
The year is going,
Let him go;
Ring out the false,
Ring in the true.

Over the Border, New Year's Eve is a greater festival than is Christmas, and Scotch bonnets are conspicuous among the crowd which awaits to hear the bells of our City's cathedral ring their last chime of the Old Year. Then, under the waving of the Scottish flag, in hand-in-hand comradeship, the nostralgia of the expatriated finds voice in singing "Auld Lang Syne."

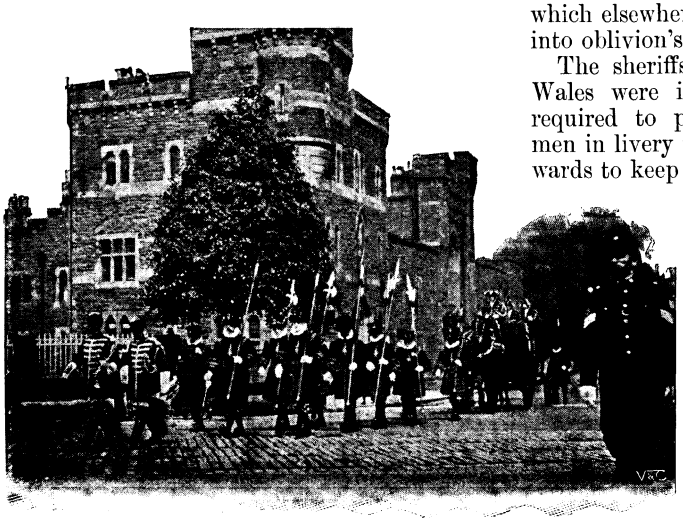
Robert Burns, in a letter to Mr. Thomson dated September, 1793, says: "One song more and I have done—'Auld Lang Syne.' The air is but mediocre, but . . . the old song, which has never been in print, nor even in MS., until I took it down from an old man's singing, is enough to recommend any air."

Shrovetide, the time of confession, since shrove is but a corruption of "shrive," we are apt to associate only with pancakes. But Johannes Boc describes it as a period in which "men eat and drink and abandon themselves to every kind of sportive foolery, as if resolved to have their fill of pleasure before they die." And in Dorking some trace of the foolery to which he refers is still to be seen; for football is there played in the streets under the reproving eye of the police. From times beyond the memory of present inhabitants of Dorking it has been customary for the lads and young men of the town to play a game of football in the streets on Shrove Tuesday. Of late years the police have tried to stop the practice. The football still annually makes its appearance, and the police try to confiscate it. And when two or three footballs have been seized, the lads give up their game, finding it somewhat too expensive.

SHOOTING WRENS ON ST. STEPHEN'S DAY IN IRELAND.

Shrove Tuesday is a great day, too, in Chester; and, indeed, that beautiful city retains a tenacious hold on many observances which elsewhere have been allowed to drop into oblivion's pit.

The sheriffs of counties in England and Wales were in the reign of Charles II. required to provide a limited number of men in livery to escort the judges and afterwards to keep order in the assize court; and although in 1887, by Act of Parliament, the court of quarter sessions was given power to direct police constables to undertake this duty, it has never been called upon by the high-sheriffs of Chester to do so, as they have always preferred to adhere to the old custom of providing their own javelin-men.



JAVELIN-MEN ESCORTING THE JUDGE TO THE ASSIZES AT CHESTER.

In many English rural towns and districts there were formerly elected, with

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burlesque ceremonies, mock mayors; and some of these ceremonies seem even now to be adherent to the offices of civic dignitaries. Dunstable's mayor is soundly bumped at the boundary-post of his jurisdiction, and many burgesses at the same time receive like treatment in performance of the ceremony called "Beating the Boundaries," whilst at High Wycombe the old custom of weighing the mayor, recorder, and chief magistrates, aldermen, town clerk, and chief constable takes place annually.

Quit-rents, the direct outcome of feudalism, were formerly rents paid in kind by tenants whereby they were released from feudal service. The earliest form of these payments was by personal service, generally labour on the land, as is shown by the word "rent," from "render." In the reign of Edward I., one Walter Maresculius paid six horseshoes, with nails, for a certain building which he held, *in capite*, from the King; and a Walter Le Brun, farrier, of the Strand, negotiated the acquisition of a piece of land in the Parish of St. Clement's, for which he was to pay the parish annually six horseshoes. But as subsequently the ground became the property of the Lord Mayor and citizens of London, who still render to His Majesty's Exchequer this peculiar quit-rent payment, it is probable that Walter Le Brun never acquired it.

Annually a curious ceremony takes place before the King's Remembrancer at the Royal Courts of Justice, when the City Solicitor of London, in respect of property in Shropshire, on behalf of the Corporation, pays to the Crown a rent which consists of six horseshoes, sixty-one nails, a bundle of faggots, a billhook and hatchet wherewith to chop the faggots.

NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATIONS IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.

Before sunrise, on St. Martin's morn, an interesting ceremony is observed on Knightlow Hill, near Rugby, on the once famous coach-road from London to Holyhead.

On this hill is a tumulus, on the top of which is a square, hollow stone, the remains of an old wayside cross, erected probably in the middle of the fourteenth century.

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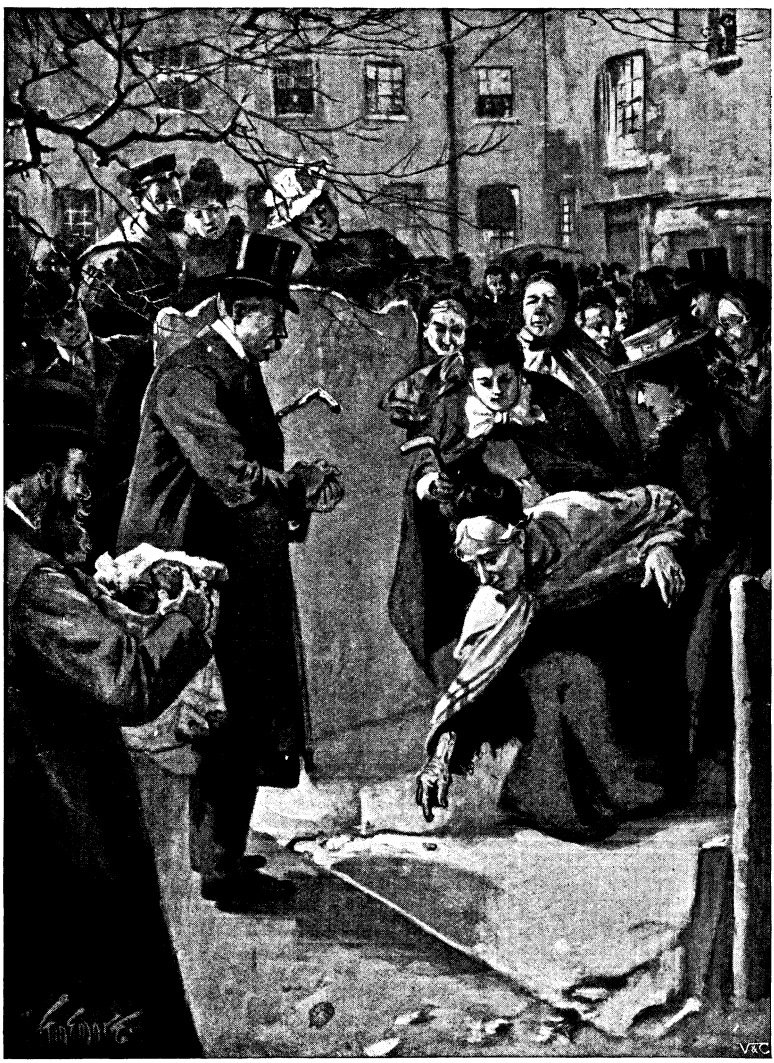
Dugdale, in his history of Warwickshire, supposes the mound to be the burial-place of a Danish or British chief, and as the territories of the Saxons and Danes were at this point divided by the old fosseway, this supposition is probably correct.



TWENTY-ONE OLD LADIES PICK UP SIXPENCES FROM TOMBS IN ST. BARTHOLOMEW-THE-GREAT CHURCHYARD ON GOOD FRIDAY.

The ceremony of collecting the "Wrath," or "Wroth" money commences by the Steward of the Hundred of Knightlow taking his place facing the east, and inviting those present to stand round the cross, whereupon he reads what is called the "Charter of the Assembly," The representative of each contributory parish is then cited to appear and cast the required contribution into the hollow of the stone, repeating these words, "Wroth Money." In the old days there was a more elaborate formality observed, that of going three times round the cross, which is now discontinued, as is also the fine for non-payment of thirty shillings and a white bull. The meaning of the word "Wroth" is derived from the Anglo-Saxon "wroth," a roadway; or "weorth," a field, which last means also price or value, so that possibly the payment represents the right of those paying the money to send their cattle over certain roads at certain seasons.

There have been many people who, fearful of oblivion, have devised some scheme for the hoped-for glorification of their own memories. But the particular ceremonies which, by a gift of money, they have succeeded in establishing, have done little more to raise them from the ranks filled by "Village Hampdens" than to associate their names with the perpetuation of some individual whim. This is the case in the curious festivities held at St. Ives, Cornwall, every five years, in accordance with the will of Mr. John Knill, who, in the latter end of the eighteenth century, held for twenty years the office of collector of Customs at that town. There is erected to his memory, near Tregenna Castle, a quaint structure; and the trustees of his will pay to the owner of the land on which it stands a rental of sixpence a year,

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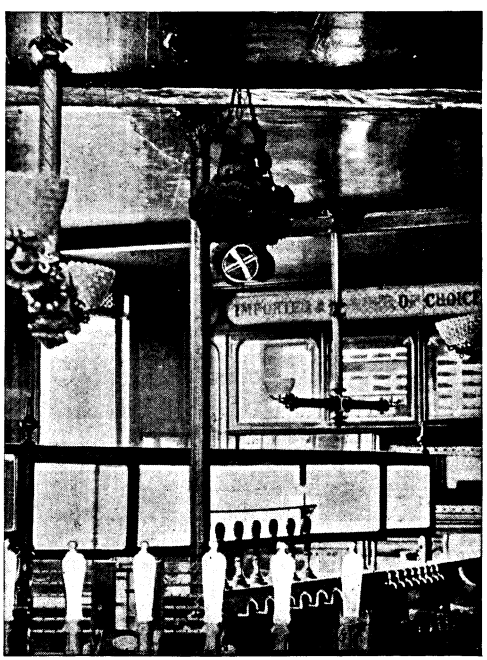
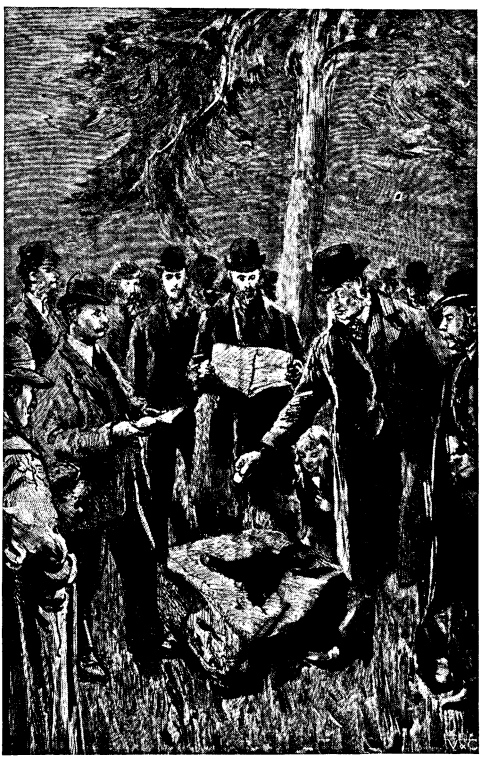
WEIGHING THE MAYOR AT HIGH WYCOMBE.

with power of distress to the landlord, secured on a farm, in the neighbourhood, of some value. His will directs, also, that every five years ten pounds should be expended by the incumbent, the mayor, and the collector of Customs, in a dinner, on the feast-day of St. James the Apostle, and it further gives permission to each diner to invite two friends. Five pounds he also left to be equally divided amongst ten girls, the ages of none of them to exceed ten years, and all to be the daughters of fishermen or tinners. The will also directs that these girls shall, between the hours of ten and twelve in the forenoon of St. James's Day,



IN THE "WIDOW'S SON," A PUBLIC-HOUSE IN THE EAST OF LONDON, A CLUSTER OF HOT-CROSS BUNS IS SUSPENDED FROM THE CEILING EVERY GOOD FRIDAY.



COLLECTING WROTH SILVER ON KNIGHTLOW HILL, NEAR RUGBY.

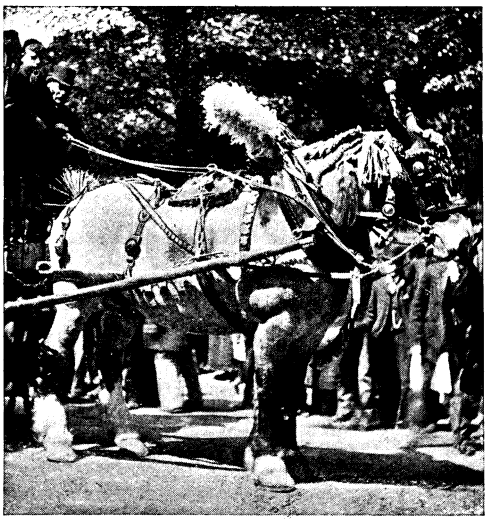
dance for a quarter of an hour at least on the ground adjoining the mausoleum, and that one pound be paid to the fiddler, as honorarium, who plays to the girls whilst they dance.

A curious Good Friday custom is to be seen in the interior of the "Widow's Son" public-house in the east of London, where from a beam in the ceiling is suspended a cluster of Hot Cross buns. This custom can be distinctly traced to the belief, at one time common everywhere in England, and still retained in Dorsetshire, that bread marked with a cross and hung up in a house will

have the effect of preventing all breads baked during the year going stringy or reamy, and is analogous to that of the Irishwomen who dip their fingers into the milk, cross the cow, and say: "Mary and our Lord preserve thee until I come to thee again!"

In the churchyard of St. Bartholomew-the-Great, in Smithfield, twenty-one specially chosen, poor, aged widow women are the recipients of a peculiar bounty, the picking up of sixpences placed on a particular tomb. But, as all records of the testatrix were destroyed by fire, nothing but the fund and the tradition of its application remain. An extra bounty of half-a-crown to each widow, lately added by a lady living at Westgate, makes this special Good Friday custom peculiarly attractive.

The name of the month of May is of doubtful origin. Ovid suggests Maia, the mother of Mercury, to whom the Romans were accustomed to sacrifice; and this is most probable. It was considered an unlucky month amongst the Romans, on account of the celebration of the Lemuria, and they contracted no marriages during it—a superstition still to be found amongst ourselves.



A DECORATION FOR CART-HORSE PARADE.

A PRINT BY ALBERT DURER WHICH SHOWS THAT IDEALS OF HORSE ADORNMENT WERE MUCH THE SAME 400 YEARS AGO AS TO-DAY.

Of May Day festivities, Borlase makes this observation: "Their usage is nothing more than a gratulation of the spring . . . . . to testify universal joy at the revival of vegetation."

Chaucer, in his "Court of Love," tells how on May Day: "Fourth go'th al the Court, both most and lest, to fetche the flouris fresh and braunch, and blome." And the Roman Calendar makes the following observation: "The boys go out maying"; but Strutt it is who leaves us with the prettiest picture of the season, in the foreground of which are the London milkmaids, who "go about the streets with their garlands and music, dancing."

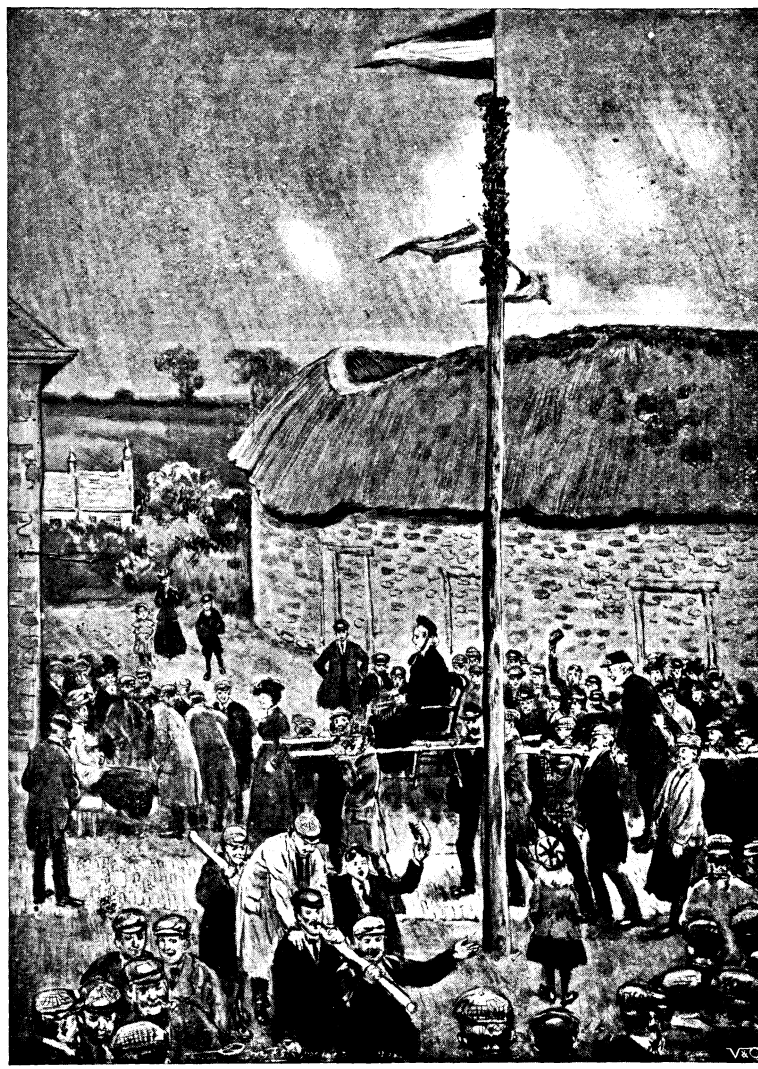
It was the custom amongst the ancient Britons, before the introduction of Christianity, to erect Maypoles, adorned with flowers, in honour of the goddess Flora; and Stubbs, 1583, thus describes the Maypole bringing: "They have twentie or fortie yoke of oxen, every oxe havying a sweete nosegai of flowers tyed to the tippes of his horns, and these oxen draw home this Maiepole, which is covered over with flowers and hearbes bound rounde

aboute with stringes from the top to the bottom, and sometimes painted with variable colours, with two or three hundred men, women and children following it with great devotion. And thus being reared up, with handkerchiefs and flagges streaming on the toppe, they straw the ground aboute, binde greene boughs about it, set up summer halls, bowers and arbours hard by it. And then fall they to banquet and feast, to leape and dance about it as the heathen people did at the dedication of their idols, whereof this is a perfect patterne, or rather the thing itself."

One of the mediæval Maypole songs is still used in many a country village *fête*—

Strike up, saies Watt,
Agreed, saies Matt,
And I preethee, fidler, play,
Soe saies Hodge;
Agreed, saies Madge,
For 'tis holiday.
Then every lad did doff
His hat unto his lasse,
And everie girl did cursie, cursie, cursie
Upon the grasse.

A great Maypole is annually erected at the May Fair, held at Corby, near Kettering; but, high as it is, it does not reach to the proportion of the famous one put up in the Strand, opposite Somerset House, in 1661, which was 134 feet in height.



"CHAIRING" AT THE GREAT POLE FAIR AT CORBY, NEAR KETTERING.

One of the May Day customs which continues with us, though not in its original character, is the decorating with ribbons of the horses of wagons.

In "The Life of Mrs. Pilkington," the writer says: "They took places in the waggon and quitted London early on May morning; and it being the custom in this month for the passengers to give the waggoner at every Inn a ribbon to adorn his team, she soon discovered the origin of the proverb. 'As fine as a Horse,' for, before they got to the end of their journey, the poor beasts were almost blinded by the parti-coloured, flowing honours at their heads."

Macaulay, in 1791, wrote: "We are by no means so tenacious of old usages and diversions in this country as we should be, or as they are in other parts of the world." And it would be a great pity were the rich legacy of romance, which leaves its impress

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HANDSELLING THE ORCHARD: AN OLD DEVONSHIRE CUSTOM WHICH STILL SURVIVES.

On Christmas Eve, the Squire, with his family, friends, and tenants, used to proceed to the orchard, bearing hot cake and cider as an offering to the principal trees. The cake was formally placed in a fork of the tree, over which the cider was poured. During the ceremony, the men fired guns and pistols, and the women and girls shouted "Bear, bear apples and pears enow, barnfuls, bagfuls, sackfuls, hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!"

on these customs, to be dissipated by their heirs—the young spendthrifts of this twentieth century whose surname is Realism. The more we can conserve such pageants and occasions as tend to foster the feeling of good fellowship between classes, the better will it be for the unity of us as a people. And we can do this without questioning too seriously how far into Paganism the roots of such rites pierce; for as nothing endures and nothing is precise, marginal inexactness, suiting our present civilisation, has removed from them all that was subversive of morality.

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MR. JESSOP'S EXPERIMENT.

By ETHEL TURNER.*

ITH a certain natural hardness that belongs to all young things, the girls at Sea View School laughed and giggled greatly amongst themselves when they came back from the Christmas vacation and found their head-mistress, Miss Mayne, had employed her time in being married.

"Old Hannah will go next," said Inez Flavelle, the school beauty, "and then Peters will begin to look out for a wife."

Hannah was the school-cook, fifty if a day, and woefully unbeautiful. Peters, the gardener, would never see sixty again. The comparison was surely a harsh one, for Miss Mayne was only forty.

Twenty years ago she had been engaged to this same man whom she had now married, Captain John Black, long time a "mariner of the sea." There was pink in her cheeks then, and the happy light of youth in her eyes; Inez herself had not more dimples nor more of the sun's brightness meshed in her hair.

There came no blinding storm, no violent earthquake to the young life; merely a grey dulness settled down over it and hid the sun for just a score of years.

There were helpless young sisters and brothers in her family, and an invalid mother; the father dying suddenly, left nothing but the big house to them, where they had lived so long. Miss Mayne opened a boarding-school in it.

"Soon, soon," she said desperately to her eager lover from the seas. There were all sorts of things, she told herself, in the pleasant Bag of Hope that hangs suspended above the world; someone would leave them a legacy, the boys would get on, the next sister Marie would take her place.

But the years dropped away one after the other, and not one bit of brightness had fluttered down from that brilliant bag to which her eyes turned so frequently. No legacy came, one boy went wrong, another died, Marie slipped into womanhood, stood aghast at the prospect of taking her sister's place in the grey, and rushed into a hasty and most unfortunate marriage; the mother was frailer than ever. After seven years, Miss Mayne gently but very resolutely cut herself off from her sailor lover; she could not bear to bring the grey mist over his cheery life.

He gave in at last, sulkily, and went away. For thirteen years he sailed the world, married, they said, to his ship. He almost forgot the pale girl who had given him back the ring that still lay in his desk, but no other woman appealed to him strongly enough for marriage, and he led a jovial, pleasant enough life, ploughing the great oceans, familiar with every continent, finding friendliness in every aspect of the stars.

Then it happened he was a year without a ship. They were making a cargo-boat of his old one, and the new one of which he had been promised the command was still building. He refused a temporary post, saying he would be a landsman for a year, and then, being in the same city at the time as his old love, curiosity prompted him to seek her out.

"If she has grown stout," he said to himself as he rang the bell at the selfsame house, "then it is 'Good-bye' again. But if she is still slim—well, who knows?" He had been for tea the night before to a home made strangely sweet and restful by a woman, and the remembrance tempted him.

Her figure bore inspection, she was thin to a fault. Exceeding primness hung about the mouth his own young lips had kissed, her eyes were quiet, her hair grey, her cheeks quite without colour. She dressed staidly, spoke staidly, as befitted the head of a school. But the uncontrollable rush of colour that flooded her cheeks when she saw him first made his heart young again.

Coming straight from the salt freshness and sunshine of his healthy life, the still greyness of hers filled all his nature with remorse and a rush of compassion. The mother was long since dead, the family was scattered, but the quiet, old-fashioned school

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still went on, the quiet, old-fashioned mistress still at the head. Marie had died a year ago and had left two orphan girls to her sister's care; the school went on to clothe and give them shelter.

When this lover of her youth again begged her to come to him, she gazed at him despairingly. One year ago, and she could have gone to him with a free heart; now there were these poor little girls clinging to her hand.

"Never mind," he said; "bring them, too. I'll manage someway." He was rather dismayed, certainly, for an unfortunate speculation had swept away his savings, and he had nothing but a somewhat meagre captain's pay. "Yes, I'll look after them," he repeated. He could not help feeling it was inconsiderate, and in a line with all her other conduct, for Marie to die.

But this Miss Mayne's gentle pride forbade. Wait longer she could not ask her lover to do, but she begged him to allow her to continue her school for another year or two.

"I have some very well-paying pupils coming," she said. "In two years, with care, I could save five hundred pounds. Could you not be content to marry me and come here to live till then?"

For so yielding a woman she was strangely pertinacious of this point, and finally he consented lazily. After all, he told himself, it might be as well: he was quite unversed in the ways of women. Perhaps if she had nothing whatever to do with her hours, he would have to be running after her with fans and cushions and smelling-salts all day; he had once found this was the lot of a passenger, a fine fellow and a friend of his, during the idleness of a voyage.

But he sent a couple of extra servants into the house, and he made a generous allowance for bills, and big quantities of meat and beer and tobacco and other manly things began to be carried through the meek, surprised, white gate of that abode of petticoats.

In the natural course of things so active a man could not live long in that beehive and not want to prove to the queen bee that her mode of government was all wrong.

"It is no way, no way at all to bring up girls," he said. "You have far too many rules, my dear: the unfortunate little beggars can't yawn without trespassing on one of them. You should have known Jessop, my dear—there was the man for a schoolmaster, and lost, quite lost as a sailor."

Mrs. Black, before she had been married three months, knew Jessop almost as well as she knew her husband, although with her actual eyes she never had seen him. He had been first mate on the vessel her husband had commanded so many years. A married man, a man with seven stalwart sons to his credit, but never a daughter, he was always theorising about how girls should be trained, and telling the captain just how he would have brought up a daughter if Heaven had granted him one instead of so many sons.

There were other things Jessop was interested in — inventions, for instance. Many a spare hour he spent trying to perfect some improvement for a sewing-machine, or drawing diagrams to illustrate how the weight of rolling stock on the railways might be decreased. But the training of girls was his pet hobby.

The school was pairing for its daily walk with the governess.

"There wouldn't be any of that if Jessop were steering here," said the Captain, "or that, or that," and he indicated a couple of round-shouldered, pasty-faced girls. He was standing with his wife at the window of her private sitting-room, and watching the procession fall into order.

"There's only one girl in the lot who looks what I'd call 'fit,'" he continued. "There, that bright-looking little thing in blue can't stand still a moment. Look at her! There! the old hen's after her. Ah! going to make her walk all by herself. Poor little beggar! poor little beggar!"

Mrs. Black was watching the school imp with strange eyes. A fine, straight little child she was—overflowing with animal spirits, in mischief twenty times a day, twenty times a day reprimanded.

"That is Edna Royd," she said. "When she comes in, she has half-a-dozen impositions to write: 'It is unladylike to shout,' 'Enter a room quietly,' and similar things." The schoolmistress spoke in a curious tone of voice.

"Poor little beggar!" repeated the Captain; and he looked after the jolly little thing with real pity in his eyes. "You couldn't let her off one or two of them, Helen?"

"I intend to let her off everything," said Mrs. Black, and her voice was still strange.

"Eh?" said the Captain, puzzled. He looked away from the window and down at his wife, and he seemed then to have seen her face for the first time since she was young. Her thin mouth was working, the blood had come to her cheeks—not with the easy ebb and flow of youth, but in two

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"She flung the blackboard duster high in the air."

painful patches. Her faded eyes were filled with light.

"John," she said, "I have been making the most frightful mistakes all my life."

"Eh?" said John again.

His wife turned round, walked the room several times in agitated silence, and came back to his side again.

"Ever since I—since we—since I have known you again," she said, "this has been working up in me. Every time I see you, hear you, I feel the wrong I have been doing." Her delicate, white hand fluttered against his harsh serge coat; her eyes—wet, luminous — were gazing upon his sea-roughened visage with look of open worship, that slumbered there often, but seldom was boldly in evidence.

"B-b-but—I'm afraid I don't follow you, my dear," said the perplexed mariner.

"Oh!" said his wife, and suddenly all the prim control of years deserted her. "Look

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at me! Look at me, John! I saw myself this morning — crushed, grey, perfectly proper, colourless, lifeless. Look at my hair —and oh, my lips, such thin, prim lines! I am forty, John—forty—forty—though you never asked. I can never be young again! I never have been young!"

The Captain sought to soothe her. He told her the adverse fates had been too strong, but that all was well now. "There," he said, "there. Wouldn't you like a cup of tea? Yes, yes; I'll send Mary up with some nice, hot tea."

But this was not all that was so strongly agitating his wife; her words were running on again, failing, stopping, gathering strength once more.

"Don't you see? Can't you see where my fault is?" she said. "All these girls, these poor young girls, that pass through my care—— Why, I have been devoting years to pruning them, and restraining them, and moulding them to all one pattern. I write rules for this, and rules for that, as you say; they can hardly yawn without trespassing on some injunction. I have been thinking of the girls I have turned out—bunch after bunch of them, nearly all as alike as those wretched little native roses in that prim bunch there are like each other. I've clipped here, and I've trimmed here, and trimmed there. And oh! such pitiful things I have made, just like myself."

The Captain was distressed, completely at sea, and quite without the skill necessary to make a way amongst such waves. He suggested tea again, then *sal volatile*. How could she ever make him understand, bring him to know how all the stifled youth in her was crying out suddenly to repay her error with these girls of hers?

Next door to them had come to live a very modern young couple; the wife was a breezy, bright girl, who went long, joyous tramps with her boy husband, and laughed a hearty, ringing laugh, and rode any horse that she could beg or borrow in the district, and scorched down hills on her bicycle.

The bride of forty summers gave her the most intense admiration; here was a creature, she told herself, fresh from the making, and with all her individuality and glad nature left unspoiled. And here was herself, narrow, precise, correct, with every bit of nature carefully repressed, everything that might have individualised her religiously weeded out. No one would ever know how the Captain's unsoftened voice about the house, and the tramping of his great boots, worried her nerves — how unutterably sick his tobacco smoke made her. Nor yet would they know the fierce scorn she had for herself over these things—the protests she made that she enjoyed, really enjoyed, the smell of a pipe. That healthy young thing next door actually smoked cigarettes at times. The sight of Edna had fired the mine this afternoon. This strong-willed child, with her sturdy, honest young nature, her love of boys' games, her passionate rebellion against discipline—why, for two years now, she, the culpable head-mistress, had been striving by all means in her power to clip this young eagle's wings and turn her into a tame, meek, domestic fowl!

Thoughts of all the other rebellious girls she had had in her care from year to year crowded upon the distressed lady — what bright, original women they might have made, she said to herself, if she had only let them alone, instead of forcing them into machinery that turned out only one pattern! Then her thoughts went to her model girls who had left her care, laden with good conduct prizes, girls who talked correctly and walked correctly, whose very thoughts were correct. No admiration was in her mind for them to-day, nothing but a frank contempt.

And when her thoughts went seeking after them still further, and she remembered that this one who left her care ten years ago was still unmarried, and that one keeping a mild, little school, and half-a-dozen others were leading tame, colourless lives in different situations, she felt aghast.

"Can't you—oh! *can't* you see," she burst out again to her husband, "how frightfully wrong my system has been all these years? Edna, for instance—left to herself, or managed as Mr. Jessop would have managed her, she would be another bright, fresh woman like Mrs. Greville, next door. And here am I trying all I know to make her—like myself."

"Mrs. Greville!" said the Captain, who had his own old-fashioned ideas about women. "I don't like those loud, advanced young women myself. You won't go far wrong if you make the little beggar like yourself, my dear. But I'd let her off her lines sometimes, perhaps."

The patches on his wife's cheeks burned more deeply.

"No," she said almost vehemently. "No, no, it is all wrong—a woman when she is my age should either be a happy, busy wife and mother, or else a bright, happy woman of business, just as a single man would be

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Not a repressed, half-trained, nervous, dependent woman like I am. If Mrs. Greville were not married, she would still be a strong, cheerful, clever woman—and she would have plenty of fun—I seem to have had no fun in all my life."

The Captain looked uneasy. "I didn't know you had views, my dear," he said. "What you are talking of is a mere matter of vitality; some have more than others, that is all."

"And that is the very thing I have been trying to crush out all these years, in every girl," returned his wife excitedly. "It seems to me now the most desirable thing in life, and the one thing to keep the world from becoming stagnant. All women ought to be like Mrs. Greville."

"Heaven forbid!" said the Captain. Only a few hours ago he had been nearly knocked down by that gay-hearted young woman off for her morning spin.

Mrs. Black rose energetically to her feet. "I am going out to tear up the sheet of rules in every room," she said.

The Captain laughed. "You'll let Pandemonium loose on us," he said. "Give the little beggars a bit more liberty, if you like, but preserve moderation."

But the schoolmistress, roused after all these lethargic years, could not be content with half measures. "From Monday," she said, "I shall conduct the school precisely on the lines of a boys' school—precisely as Mr. Jessop would have done. I am convinced he is quite right, and it will be the finest training in the world for girls."

She sat down at night and wrote notes to the parents of her pupils. She told them she was anxious to try a new system with the girls. She said she had come to the conclusion that a treatment more on the lines of that observed in boys' schools would have a beneficial effect on the moral character of the girls, who, she was grieved to observe, displayed much pettiness and narrowness and conceit.

The parents in every case said they were so entirely satisfied with Mrs. Black's training that they were quite content to leave her hands free to do as she pleased with their daughters.

Upon that the lady broke the pleasing news to her pupils.

"Hurrah!" shouted young Edna, when she at last grasped the astounding fact that she was required—actually required—to act like a boy. "Hurrah, hurrah!" and she flung the blackboard duster high in the air, no hat being available.

The head-mistress was coughing. She had actually begun to say, from sheer force of habit: "Bring me fifty lines for being unladylike, Edna Royd," and then had been obliged to cough the sentence aside.

"Sit down in your seat, Edna," was all she said; but the imp seized her rule and was up again in a second like a jack-in-the-box.

"Why—why," she almost shrieked, "boys play cricket! We'll have to get a bat and ball!"

"Certainly a bat and ball," said Mrs. Black; cricket had been almost the first thing to suggest itself to her.

"And football—*every* boy plays football," cried the girl.

Mrs. Black shrank back somewhat. "N-no, Edna; I—I think not quite football," she said.

"Oh, we ought to do it properly," Edna said. "There's a cricket season, you know, and a football season. We couldn't go back to croquet when the cricket was over."

Mrs. Black had known nothing of seasons, but the croquet-box she certainly had resolved to take away. A brilliant idea came to her.

"You could have kites," she said; "plenty of exercise would be afforded in running up the hills with them."

"And marbles," said a dull little girl, her eyes ashine.

Again Mrs. Black shrank a little. She had a mental vision of Inez and another stately girl down on their knees in the dust.

"I—I think not quite marbles, Minnie," she faltered.

The duster flew up in the air again.

"Why—why," cried the imp, "we can call each other Smith and Jones—*all* boys do!"

"Smith and Jones!" echoed the head-mistress.

"Pass the salt, Morley. Have you done your French, Flavelle? Lend me your cotton, Henderson," explained the imp succinctly.

Mrs. Black tried not to look disturbed. "Well, I might allow you to do that, perhaps," she said, "though I cannot see why you should like it better than saying Inez and Muriel," she said.

"We'll simply *have* to call each other nicknames," pursued Edna; "things like Fodgers, and Snooks, and Plumduff, and Treacle. My brother Alec is always called Treacle Royd."

"No more darning," said a lazy girl ecstatically.

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"Nor sewing—boys never do," breathed another.

"Certainly you will not give up sewing," said Mrs. Black sharply. "What sort of women would you make?"

"But I thought we were going to be men," said Edna dolefully.

Mrs. Black saw that her experiment would have its difficulties, and resolved to find out Mr. Jessop's theories in this respect.

"Look here, girls," she said—and that of itself was a concession; a month ago she would have said "Attention, young ladies!"—"you must all use your good sense, and do everything in moderation. I told you I was going to let you act as if you were boys; I see I must modify that and say more as if you were boys. I want you all to become hardy and fearless and self-dependent—that is the chief thing. I shall no longer set Edna fifty lines if I see her up a tree or on a fence; after school, between four and six, if any girl wishes to walk to the shops to match crewel silks or anything, she may go without a governess or an older girl, as has hitherto been the rule. The deportment lessons and the conversation class, the formal letters home, and things of that character, will no longer have a place on the school curriculum, and during the hours formerly occupied by them you will be out of doors indulging in sports like——"

"Football," whispered Edna.

"Kites," said Mrs. Black, "or paper chases, or cricket. I will send for a bat immediately, and a ball—a soft tennis ball. I should not like any of you to get your hands hurt."

"A tennis ball. My eye!" said that uncouth imp; and, unversed as Mrs. Black was in boys' language, the scorn in the young person's voice made the meaning clear.

"Edna," she said sternly, "how dare you! Fifty—yes, I certainly must inflict fifty lines for that. Bring me fifty lines after school."

"Oh!" said Edna in anguish, "mayn't we even talk slang? That's really nothing, dear Mrs. Black; truly it isn't. You should just hear my brothers. Oh, surely, if we're going to be boys, we needn't always be mincing our words!"

"I am punishing you for your disrespect to me," said Mrs. Black, and entirely evaded the responsibility of answering the last question.

"Well, it must be a hard ball," pleaded the girl. "I'd as soon play rounders as cricket with an indiarubber ball." Mrs. Black was forced to say she would "see."

The school was as the Captain had foretold—a Pandemonium in a week.

Talking was no longer prohibited at table or in the dormitories, and bad marks were not inflicted for every little lapse from virtue, such as when Edna, in the middle of telling an exciting story about a dog that had chased her, pushed her chair back and, for realistic effect, rushed barking round the dinner-table; or when Muriel began to whistle for sheer joy when out one day; or when Edna electrified a party of starched old ladies by playing leap-frog on the road outside with the dull little girl. For the latter feat the imp had been summoned to the head-mistress.

"Dear Mrs. Black," said the wily little party, who knew how to get her own way, "it is only because people are not accustomed to seeing girls have fun yet. If those ladies had been passing the Grammar School and seen two boys doing it, they simply wouldn't have glanced at them twice," and Mrs. Black, grown quite thin and harassed-looking in this little time, felt compelled to send her away with only the mildest reproof.

Cricket was not a brilliant success yet. The Captain himself marked out the ground, put in the stumps, and established himself as umpire. But the paddock was a shadeless place, and summer's blinding heat lay on the land. It was in vain Midge pointed out the fact that up the hill the Grammar School paddock was alive with cricketers, and that they all wore only caps on their heads.

The elder girls were willing to play, in order to get out of lessons, but they infused no energy into their movements, and they wore their largest hats and gossamers. Inez scouted languidly, with a red sunshade held behind her delicate face.

The fun at the school went on, fast, free, and furious. Reports of the wild doings there spread about, and the people said marriage had turned the head-mistress's head! When she was Miss Mayne, it was impossible to find a more decorous, better conducted school. They blamed the Captain; these shocking innovations were his, they said; they would have found it impossible to believe the truth, that the old-fashioned Captain, who looked with horror on advanced women, was watching the proceedings almost with alarm, and that it was the staid head-mistress alone who sat astride on Mr. Jessop's unmanageable experiment, and clung there

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pertinaciously while it careered downhill with her.

The name of the first mate was on her tongue twenty times a day.

"Did Mr. Jessop consider girls should drill more than half an hour at a time? Had Mr. Jessop intended to ever have his daughter (when he had one) taught to sew? What new form of cricket for girls was it that Mr. Jessop had invented?"

"Oh, hang Jessop!" said the Captain, at last, in strong irritation. He found himself wishing heartily he had checked his first mate's theories and experiments, and made him give the whole of his time to seamanship.

"Inez scouted languidly."

Two or three of the elder girls about this time had asked to be removed from the school. Mrs. Black saw them go, quite unmoved. "It is too late for these elder ones," she said; "their bones are too set. It is to the younger ones I must direct all my care."

The Captain begged her continually to give up the riotous school and come away with the little orphans to some quiet spot until the building of the ship was accomplished. But no, the schoolmistress clung desperately to her wild steed.

"Upon my soul! upon my soul!" ejaculated the horrified Captain one afternoon when he was patrolling a little-used path in the garden, and rolling very slightly from side to side in the way that amused the girls.

Among the bushes at one side were two little figures in short frocks and school aprons. One was crying miserably, her face a strange greenish colour, her lips white. The other—Edna, of course—was also pallid about the cheeks and lips, but the look of high courage in her eyes still shone. She was puffing very, very laboriously at one of the Captain's own pipes, and the smell of his own strong tobacco came to his nostrils as he stood there.

She turned a little at the sound of the crunching of acacia leaves beneath the heavy footsteps, she smiled at the Captain in a faint, sickly fashion. Nowadays she found it seldom necessary to hide her misdeeds, and on this occasion she found it quite unnecessary, for no one could deny that every boy who was worth anything had, some time or other, made the trial of smoking.

"It'll be all r-r-right when I once get it g-g-going," she explained, gasping and choking with the effort. "I got it alight once s-s-splendidly, but M-M-Minnie let it go out."

There was no light of admiration or amusement on the Captain's face, at which Edna felt distinctly surprised and aggrieved, for she could not even pretend to herself that she was enjoying the experiment; she had a vague sort of feeling that she was doing this for the good of the school and girl-kind in general. She felt quite injured at the look of horror and disgust upon the Captain's face.

"You abominable little sweep!" he said angrily, and snatched the ill-smelling pipe

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from her fresh little lips. "Go to Mrs. Black at once! You shall be well punished for this —I'll see to it myself."

Edna mingled her tears with Minnie's as she was hustled up through the garden.

"Y-y-you know q-quite well all b-b-boys learn to s-s-smoke, Mrs. Black," was her tearful reproach when brought before the head-mistress. "My b-brother T-Treacle did when he was only t-t-ten. I am turned twelve, and Minnie's thirteen; it was quite t-time we b-began."

"Even your brother wouldn't have touched a villainous pipe," said the still irascible Captain. "Boys have the sense to try on cigarettes."

Edna looked at him reproachfully through her sickly tears. "You never smoke them," she sobbed; "we had to take the pipe. Of course, we would rather have tried with nice, clean cigarettes."

"Upon my soul! upon my soul!" cried the Captain again, "she doesn't realise a bit what a detestable thing she has done, Helen. For Heaven's sake do something to her!"

Mrs. Black had been greatly agitated. "Yes, yes," she said. "This is too much, too much altogether. This is beyond everything, beyond everything. I shall punish you both by—by——" Her voice grew uncertain, her eyes sought the Captain's for help in such a difficulty; this was too great an offence to be dealt with by standing in the corner, sending to bed supperless, or such time-honoured punishments. She moved closer to her husband, her voice dropped to a whisper.

"What would Mr. Jessop have done in such a case, John?" she said.

"Trounced them!" said the Captain loudly, and, glaring at the culprit one ferocious minute, he strode from the room.

Mrs. Black only shrank slightly, which showed her how far she had been carried. "No, no," she muttered to herself; "that is going too far, I'm afraid, quite too far."

She inflicted lines—five hundred of them. "Smoking is an abomination for girls," was the headline—the whole half-thousand had to be given up the next day.

"Your impositions, Edna and Minnie?" she said the following afternoon. Minnie handed up a stack of smudged slates to her, and Mrs. Black's quick pencil ticked off the number and found it correct.

"Yours, Edna?" she said coldly.

"I haven't finished," said Edna. "Mine took twice as long to do as Minnie's."

Mrs. Black looked at the slate. "Smoking is an abomination for silly girls, but all nice, jolly boys do it," the imp had written, unsparing of trouble.

"Edna, Edna!" said the headmistress, "what *shall* I do with you? There is no punishment left."

"Trounce me," said Edna cheerfully. "Go on, Mrs. Black. Treacle always gets trounced. It'll be a lot better for me than giving me billions of lines. It does you a lot more good to get a hiding, and have done with it, than always be writing and writing at stupid old lines."

Mrs. Black could not help feeling that this was a sentiment that would have won the approval of Jessop himself. And had not even her husband said: "Trounced them," as if he thoroughly endorsed the opinion? Boys flourished under a moderate amount of corporal punishment; she, herself, had seen "Treacle"—and a more manly, fearless, frank little fellow she had never met.

"I do not allow you to choose your own punishments, Edna," she said coldly. "You will write the imposition just as I set it five hundred times, and add to it: 'I must not be impertinent,' five hundred times. You will bring me both impositions next Thursday. Of course, you must stay in both half-holidays and write them."

Edna groaned over her waste labour. "I have one other thing to say," continued Mrs. Black: "lines seem to make no impression upon you, so I am going to try with you what corporal punishment, such as a boy receives, will do. The next time I have a complaint about you, I shall administer such punishment myself, and I have no doubt you will regret having made the suggestion."

But Edna thought of those nervous white hands and smiled to herself.

"What fun it will be!" she thought to herself, and cudgelled her bold little brains for an act that would bring down upon her such a punishment. It would be delightful to boast to "Treacle," whom she saw every week, that she had had a "trouncing," for he was very contemptuous of the so-called punishment at girls' schools.

The Captain came in a few days later looking positively upset.

"This is growing frightful!" he said. "I have had quite a shock, quite a shock."

Mrs. Black's anxious eyes went past him to where, with uplifted head, Edna stood, and near at hand the dull little girl, who was weeping bitterly.

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"I have just brought them in," he said,

"I found them down the road, near the post-office; they were—fighting!"

Mrs. Black sat down suddenly in her chair: the shock was too much, even for her.

"Fighting?" she repeated faintly.

Edna rushed to her knee, her brazen little face red with agitation and sundry scratches.

"What was the use of telling us we could be boys," she demanded fiercely, "if he is going to stop us every time? I didn't do anything—anything a boy wouldn't. She"—and the little termagant indicated the sobbing Minnie—"she called me a cat. Well, I wasn't going to be a regular girl any longer, and say: 'Cat yourself!' I—I"—and the breast of this small champion of her sex heaved, and her eyes glowed—"I hit her on the nose."

"There—right at the post-office," said Mrs. Black, "with people everywhere?"

"Of course," said the defaulting maiden. "Wouldn't Treacle have hit anyone straight away? He wouldn't have waited till he got back to school. The people didn't matter; they'll have to get used to things like that. But he"—and she looked reproachfully at the indignant Captain—"he came and stopped us before we could start."

A strange excitement possessed the gentle and infatuated schoolmistress.

"And what did Minnie do?" she asked in a peculiar voice.

Edna's lip curled in extremest scorn. "She tried to scratch me," she said.

Mrs. Black sent the dull little girl to the schoolroom, and Edna to bed till the morrow, when she would deal with her.

"She smiled at the Captain in a faint, sickly fashion."

"I hope you're convinced at last about your ridiculous experiment," the Captain said. "I was only just in time to stop what would have been a most disgraceful spectacle. Fortunately no one seemed to have noticed the row. Of course, you will expel the little ruffian at once."

The schoolmistress was sitting motionless in her chair, intensely thoughtful.

"Give me till to-morrow," she said. "I must think quietly what I must do." Her face looked grey, deeply sorrowful; it was being forced upon her that her cherished experiment was failing. And yet, and yet——

"There isn't another course open to you," the Captain said. "Be a sensible woman; send the girl home quietly to-morrow, or else do as I have so long asked you—give up the school entirely."

"No," she said quickly, "not that—not that; we must think of Janet and little Marie." Then she sighed profoundly to think it was not to be hers to make another Mrs. Greville of naughty Edna.

The room was darkening with the swiftly falling pall of Australian night. A deep grey shadow loomed sufficiently heavily between her husband and herself.

"Of course," she said—"of course, John, I quite recognise that it was very wrong and very unmaidenly, and all that, of the child; but—but——" her voice sank to a timid questioning hesitancy that hardly dared to find its way across the shadowy room—"don't you think Mr. Jessop would have—rather commended the action?"

That very same evening there came about

events that closed for ever the career of that young ladies' seminary.

When the Captain perceived the nervous agitation under which his wife was labouring, for once he did not suggest tea. He insisted upon carrying her right away from the school premises for a couple of hours, and trusted to a quiet trip upon the silent, shadowy river to restore her to a normal vision of things.

But when they came back, they could not get into the house—their own quiet, respectable house. There were lights everywhere, girls' voices everywhere; giggles and little terrified "Ohs!" and "Ahs!" came through the chinks of the doors and windows. It was fully five minutes before they recognised what had happened, and what was the reason the door did not open and Hannah's form appear upon the loud ringing of the master of the house.

There was a lock-out, that was the matter. Right at the bottom of it was "Treacle"; and yet he could hardly be held responsible. He had, perhaps, had a larger miscellany of boys' literature in his school trunk than most boys have. Presently it came about that he began to lend his young sister the paper-covered volumes—"Tom Flooremall's School Days," "The Barchester Boys," and similar choice works. And they had proved too much for that small, unbalanced mind. The rebels were all glorious heroes to her—martyrs at the hands of their teachers; her blood beat high at the account of their daring tricks, which generally culminated in setting all authorities at complete defiance.

And this night, while she was in durance in her bedroom, she read the thrilling narrative telling how Tom and his fellows barricaded up the college doors and windows, and boldly withstood the siege of the wrathful masters outside, who finally capitulated, and agreed humbly to every condition imposed by the schoolboy.

Edna's eyes grew more and more brilliant as she read; the idea came flashing that she should emulate these heroic spirits—to-morrow there was the Deluge, at any rate; just as well be drowned for two great deeds as one.

She communicated her ideas in whispers to the dormitory when at bedtime it slowly filled. The girls here were all young, and more of them followed her lead blindly; they listened with the fascination of horror to her wild scheme.

"But there's Hannah in the house, and old John, and Miss Hargraves," said one; "and I'm certain Nellie Green and Florrie Edwards and Inez Flavelle wouldn't join."

"So much the worse for them," said the small rebel darkly. "When we are mistresses of the position, we will remember it and show them no mercy. But, for the present, we must render them ineffectual. Leave all to me." Just so had Tom spoken.

"But Hannah," repeated the girl, "and the others—why, they'll simply rush down and open the door when the bell rings."

"Oh, no, they won't," said Edna, "not when my plans are completed."

On investigation, however, it proved that even her schemes were not very brilliant, and, somewhat to the thrilled Minnie's disappointment, did not include the gagging and binding of the three grown-ups in the house, but merely the locking up of them.

When all plans were ripe, Edna rushed down to the kitchen, where Miss Hargraves was giving the breakfast orders to old John and Hannah.

"There's something burning in the bedroom—if you're very quick, you can put it out," she gasped.

They hurried up, pell-mell, Miss Hargraves with the hastily caught up ironing-blanket in her hand.

"What, Miss Edna?" said old Hannah breathlessly—she was standing just in the doorway, while John and Miss Hargraves were inside. Edna gave her one firm push, and the next minute slammed and locked the door.

"The gas," she cried gaily as she ran away.

"Three at a stroke," she chuckled to her marvelling mates. "I'm really a bit of a genius, aren't I? Considering there's only a skylight, they can't very well get out."

It was quite a simple matter to take the key of the elder girls' room and lock it on the outside.

They finished their night toilets and went to bed, entirely ignorant of the fact that they could not get out if they wanted to.

Next Edna and her trembling followers locked the doors, front and back, inside, then all windows. For the appearance of the thing, and to emulate Tom Flooremall, Edna insisted upon piling up chairs at every doorway, and even dragging the hall-stand out, as a barricade.

They were in complete possession of the house, Edna with her brilliant, excited eyes, and half-a-dozen little girls terrified to death at the doings, yet following desperately. At the Captain's first ring, Minnie's fortress broke up.

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"Oh, I t-t-think we'd better open the d-d-d-door!" she said with chattering teeth.

"Oh, yes, l-l-l-let us!" said the others.

Edna strove frantically to rally their courage—she heaped contumely on their cowardice, she begged and besought them not to give in, she incited them with promises of impossible rewards. The Captain and Mrs. Black, out on the doorstep, hearing such extravagantly seditious speeches, felt they must be dreaming.

For five minutes the garrison held out, which was four and three-quarter minutes longer than it would have done had not its excited little captain made such frightful threats.

From the top storey came the sound of old John battering on the bathroom door; from the next floor the shouts and hammerings of the elder girls, who had just found themselves in a trap.

In the hall, Edna rampaged, beside herself with excitement, now holding this girl from opening the door, now struggling with that.

"Minnie!" said Mrs. Black's sternest voice from the other side of the door, "turn the key this instant!"

"Edna is t-t-twist—oh! t-twisting my hands!" sobbed Minnie.

"Florence and Elsie!" called Mrs. Black, "can you hear me? Take hold of Edna between you, and let Minnie open the door."

The shivering girls flew to obey: there was the sound of a scuffle, then the key was turned.

The Captain swept the light drawing-room chairs aside and entered, and the blockade was over.

But Mrs. Black's courage for Mr. Jessop's experiment never rose again. She was quite passive; when her husband next day sent all the girls to pack their boxes, and set Miss Hargraves to write notes to all the parents, she offered no resistance.

Edna wept bitterly at going; she promised anything, anything, if only she need not leave. "I'll stop being a boy, I'll be the properest, quietest girl in the world if you'll only keep me," she said with streaming eyes. "Oh, do forgive me—do, do forgive me!"

Mrs. Black was not in the least unkind, and forgave the sobbing child quite readily.

"It was not your fault, dear," she said, and Edna went away, wondering if the affair had turned the head-mistress's brain.

In two days Janet and little Marie were the only girls left. They were in high spirits when they learned that their home for the future would be on the sea, for the Captain's ship, finished at last, made this possible.

There was only one question the timid schoolmistress put while these changes were happening.

"Who will be your first mate?" she said.

And the Captain answered with much grimness: "Certainly not Jessop."

ALICE.

OF deepest blue of summer skies
Is wrought the heaven of her eyes.

Of that fine gold the autumns wear
Is wrought the glory of her hair.

Of rose leaves fashioned in the South
Is shaped the marvel of her mouth.

And from the honeyed lips of Bliss
Is drawn the sweetness of her kiss.

Of winds that wave the western fir
Is made the velvet touch of her.

'Mid twilight thrushes that rejoice
Is found the cadence of her voice.

Of all earth's songs God took the half
To make the ripple of her laugh.

I hear you ask: "Pray, who is she?"
This maid that is so dear to me.

"A reigning queen in Fashion's whirl?"
Nay, nay! She is my baby girl!

HERBERT BASHFORD.

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RED SAUNDERS AT BIG BEND:

ENTER MR. SETT, AND EXIT THE DOG

By HENRY WALLACE PHILLIPS.*

"OF all the worlds I ever broke into, this one's the most curious," said Red. "And one of the curiousest things in it is that I think it's queer. Why should I, now? What puts it into our heads that affairs ought to go so and so, when they never do anything of the sort? Take any book you read, or any story a man tells you: it runs along about how Mr. Smith made up his mind to do this or that, and proceeded to do it. And that never happened. What Mr. Smith calls making up his mind is, when you come down to bed-rock, nothing more nor less than what Mr. Smith pleasantly calls his mind dodging to cover under pressure of circumstances. That's straight. Old Lady Luck comes for Mr. Smith's mind, swinging both hands; she gives it a stem-winder on the ear; lams it for keeps on the smeller; chugs it one in the short ribs; drives right and left into its stummick, and Mr. Smith's mind breaks for cover; then Mr. Smith tells his wife that—he's made up his mind—*He*, mind you. Wouldn't that stun you?

"'He was a lovely pet.'"

"Some people would say: 'Mr. Sett and Mr. Burton made up their minds to start the Big Bend Ranch.' All right; perhaps they did, but let me give you an inside view of the factory.

"First off, Billy Quinn, Wind-River Smith, and me were putting up hay at the lake beds. It was a God-forsaken, lonesome job, to say the best of it, and we took to collecting pets, to make it seem a little more like home.

"Billy shot a hawk, breaking its wing. That was the first in the collection. He was a lovely pet. When you gave him a piece of meat, he said 'Cree,' and clawed chunks out of you; but most of the time he sat in the corner with his chin on his chest, like a broken-down lawyer. We didn't get the affection we needed out of him. Well, then Wind-River found a bullsnake asleep and lugged him home, hanging over his shoulder. We sewed a flannel collar on the snake and picketed him out until he got used to the place. And around and around and around squirmed that snake until we near got sick at our stummicks watching him. All day long, turning and turning and turning.

"'Darn it,' says I, 'I like more variety.' So that day, when I was cutting close to a timbered slew, out pops an old bob-cat and starts to open my shirt to see if I am her long-lost brother. By the time I got her strangled I had parted with most of my complexion. Served me right for being without a gun. The team run away as soon as I fell off the seat, and I was booked to walk home. I heard a squeal from the bushes, and here comes a funny little cuss. I liked the look of him from the jump-off, even if his mother did claw delirious delight out of me. He balanced himself on his stubby legs and looked me square in the eye, and he spit and fought as though he weighed

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a ton when I picked him up—never had any notion of running away. Well, that was Robert—long for Bob.

"The style that cat spread on in the matter of growing was simply astonishing; he grew so's you could notice it overnight. At the end of two months he was that big he couldn't stand up under our sheet-iron cook-stove, and this was about the beginning of our family troubles. Tommy, the snake, was a good deal of a nuisance from the time he settled down. You'd have a horrible dream in the night—be 'way down under something or other, gasping for wind, and waking up, find Tommy nicely coiled on your chest. Then you'd slap Tommy on the floor like a section of large rubber hose. But he bore no malice. Soon's you got asleep he'd be right back again. When the weather got cool, he was always under foot. He'd roll beneath you and land you on your scalp-lock, or you'd ketch your toe on him and get a dirty drop. I don't think I ever laughed more in my life than one day when Billy come in with an armful of wood, tripped on Tommy, and come down with a clatter right where Judge Jenkins, the hawk, could reach him. The Judge fastened one claw in Billy's hair and scratched his whiskers with the other. Gee! The hair and feathers flew! Bill had a hot temper and he went for the hawk like it was a man. The first thing he laid his hand on was Tommy, so he used the poor snake for a club. Wind-River and me were so weak from laughing that we near lost two pets before we got strength to interfere.

"But, as I was saying, the cold nights played Keno with our happy home. Neither Tommy nor Bob dared monkey with the Judge—he was the only thing on top of the earth the cat was afraid of. Bob used to be very anxious to sneak a hunk of meat from his Honour at times, yet when the Judge stood on one foot, cocked his head sideways, snapped his bill and said 'Cree,' Robert reconsidered. On the other hand, Tommy and Bob were for ever scrapping. Lively set-to's, I want to tell you. The snake butted with his head like a young streak of lightning. I've seen him knock the cat ten foot. And while a cat doesn't grow mouldy in the process of making a move, yet the snake is there about one seventeen-hundred-millionth part of a second sooner. And that's a good deal where those parties are concerned. Now, on cold nights, they both liked to get under the stove, where it was warm; and there wasn't room for more'n one. Hence trouble, serious trouble. Bob hunted coyotes on moonlight nights. We threw scraps around the corner of the house to bait 'em, and Bob would watch there hour on end until one got within range. It was a dead coyote in ten seconds by the watch if the jump landed. If it didn't, Bob had learned there was no use wasting his young strength trying to ketch him. He used to sit still and gaze after them flying streaks of hair and bones as though he was thinking: 'I wisht somebody'd telegraph that son-of-a-gun for me.'

"Well, then he'd be chilly and reckon he'd climb under the stove. But Thomas 'ud be there.

"'H-h-h-h-hhhh!' says Tom, in a whisper.

"'Here comes a funny little cuss.'"

"'Er-raow-pht!' says Robert. 'Mmmm-mmm—errrrr—pht!' And so on for some time, the talk growing louder; then, with a yell that would stand up every hair on your head, Bob 'ud hop him. Over goes the cook-stove. Away rolls the hot coals on the floor. Down comes the stove-pipe and the frying-pans and the rest of the truck, whilst the old Judge in the corner hollered decisions, heart-broke because he was tied by the leg and could not get a claw into the dispute.

"By the time we had 'em separated—Bob headed up in his barrel, and Tom tied up in his sack—put the fire out, and fixed things generally, there wasn't a great deal left of that night's rest.

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"But children will be children. We swore awful; still, we wouldn't have missed their company for a fair-sized farm.

"And now comes in the first little twist of the Big Bend Ranch, proper—all these things

"'We near lost two pets.'"

I'm telling you were the eggs. Here's where the critter pipped.

"'Twas November, and such a November as you don't get outside of Old Dakota, a regular mint-julep of a month, with a dash of summer, a sprig of spring, a touch of fall, and a sniff or two of winter to liven you up. If you'd formed a committee to furnish weather for a month, and they'd turned out a month like that, not even their best friends would have kicked. And here we'd been makin' hay, and makin' hay, the Ranch people thanking Providence that prairie grass cures on the stem, while we cussed, for we were sick of the sight of hay. I got so the rattle of a mower give me hysterics. We were picked because we were steady and reliable, but one day we bunched the job. Says I: 'Here; we've cut grass for four solid months includin' Sundays and legal holidays, although Heaven knows where they come in, for I haven't the least suspicion what day of the month it may be; but, anyhow, let's knock off one round.'

"So we did. I sat outside in the afternoon, while the other two boys and the rest of the family took a snooze. Here comes a man across the south flat a-horseback.

"I watched him, much interested: first place, he was the first strange human animal we'd laid eye on for six weeks; next place, his style of riding attracted attention. I thought at the time he must have invented it, him being the kind of man that hated horses, and wanted to keep as far away from them as possible, yet forced by circumstances to climb upon their backs.

"His mount was a big, American horse, full sixteen hand high, trotting in twenty-foot jumps. If I had anything against a person, just short of killing, I'd tie him on the back of a horse trotting like that. It's a great gait to sit out. Howsomever, this man didn't sit it out; what he wanted of a saddle beyond the stirrups was a mystery, for he never touched it. He stood up on his stirrups, bent forward like he was going to bite the horse in the ear soon's the strain got unendurable.

"Well, here he come, straight for us. I'd a mind to wake the other boys up, to let 'em see something new in the way of mishandling a horse; but they snored so peaceful, I refrained.

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"'How-de-do?' says he.

"I said I was worrying along, and sized him up on the quiet. He was a queer pet. Not a bad set-up man, and rather good-looking in the face. Light yellow hair, little yellow moustache, light blue eyes. And clean! Say, I never saw anybody that looked so aggravating clean in all my life. It seemed kind of wrong for him to be outdoors; all the prairie and the cabin and everything looked mussed up beside him.

"As soon as he opened up, I noticed he had a little habit of speaking in streaks, that bothered me. I missed the sense of his remarks.

"'Would you mind walking over that trail again?' I asked him. 'I do most of my thinking at a foot-step, and your ideas is over the hill and far away before I can recognise the cut of their scalp-lock.'

"'Haw!' says he and stared at me. I was just on the point of askin' him if red hair was a new thing to him, when all of a sudden he begun to laugh. 'Haw-haw-haw! says he. 'Not bad at all, ye know.'

"'Of course not,' says I. 'Why should it be?'

"This got him going. I saw him figuring away to himself, and then I had to smile so you could hear it.

"'Well,' says I, better humoured, 'tell us

"'Bob 'ud hop him.'"

it again—I caught the word "sheep" in the hurricane.'

"So he went over it, talking slow. I listened with one ear, for he had a white bulldog with him—a husky, bandy-legged brute with a black eye—and he was sniffing, dog fashion, around the door, while I blocked him out with my legs. Doggy was in a frame of mind, puzzling out bullsnake trail, and hawk trail, and bob-cat trail. He foresaw much that was entertaining the other side of the door, and wanted it, powerful.

"'Here,' says I, 'call your dog. I can't pay attention to both of you.'

"'He won't hurt anything, you know,' says the man.

"'Well, we've got a cat in there that'll hurt *him*,' I says. 'You'd better whistle

"'I wisht somebody'd telegraph that son-of-a-gun for me.'"

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him off before old Bob wakes up and scatters him around the front yard.'

"Gee! That man sat up straight on his horse! Cat hurt that dog? Nonsense! Of course, he wouldn't let the dog hurt the cat, and as long as I was afraid——

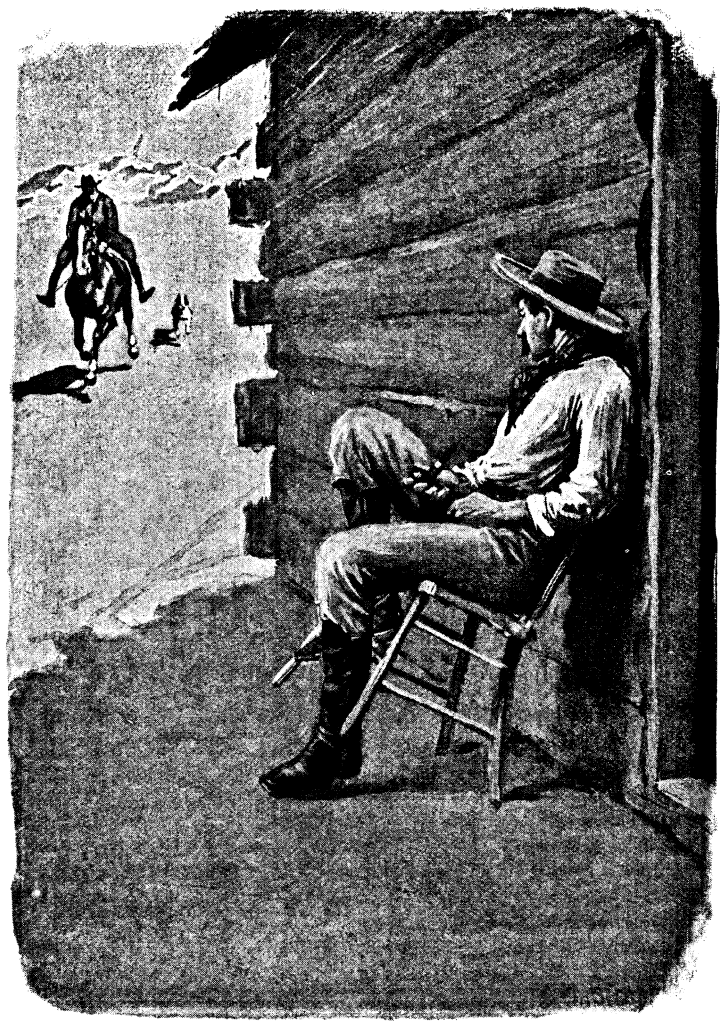
"I looked into that peaceful cabin. Billy was lying on his back, his fine, manly nose vibrating with melody; Wind-River was cooing in a gentle, choked-to-death sort of fashion, on the second bunk; Tom was coiled in the corner, the size of half a barrel; the Judge slept on his perch; Robert reposed under the cook-stove with just a front paw sticking out. It was one of them restful scenes our friends the poets sing about. It did appear wicked to disturb it, but——

"'Will you risk your dog?' I asked that man very softly and politely.

"'Certainly!' says he.

"Says I: 'His blood be on your shirt-front,' and I moved my leg.

"Well, sir, Billy landed on the grocery-shelf. Wind-River grabbed his gun and sat up, paralysed. It really was a most surprising noise. I've had hard luck in my life, but all the things that ever happened to me would seem like a recess to that bulldog. Our domestic difficulties was forgotten. 'United We Stand!' waved the motto of the lake-bed cabin. Jerusalem! That dog was snake-bit, and hawk-scratched-and-bit-and-clawed, and bobcat-scratched-and-bit-and-clawed, till you couldn't see a cussed thing in that cabin but blur. And of all the hissing and squawking and screeching and yelling and snapping and roaring and growling you or any other man ever heard, that was the darnedest. I took a look at the visitor. He'd got off his horse and was standing in the doorway with his hands spread out. His face expressed nothing at all, very forcible. Meanwhile, things were boilin' for fair; cook-stove, frying-pans, stools, boxes, saddles, tin cans, bullsnakes, hawks, bobcats, and bulldogs simply floated in the air.

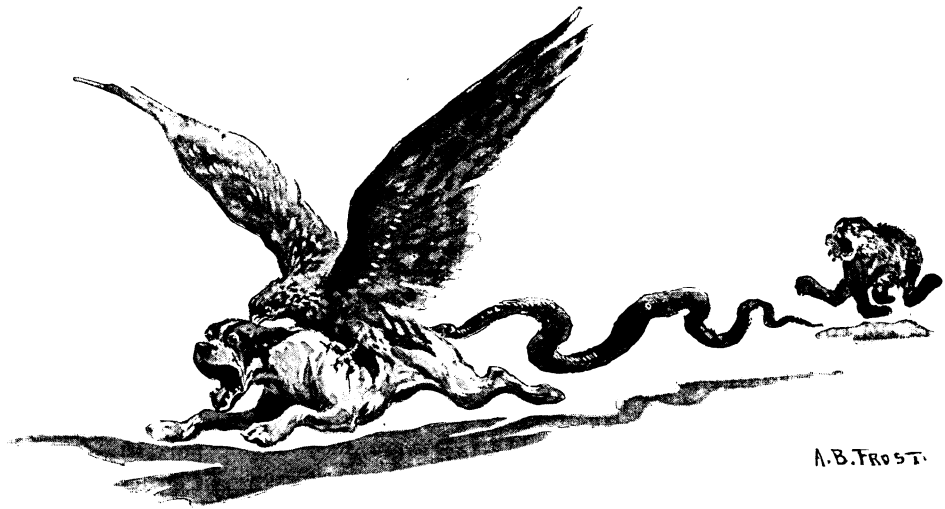


"'His style of riding attracted attention.'"

"'I wish you'd tell me what in all perdition has busted loose in this cabin, Red Saunders!' howls old Wind-River in an injured tone of voice; 'and whether I shell shoot or shan't I?'

"There come a second's lull. I see Judge Jenkins on the dog's back, his talents sunk to the hock, whilst he had hold of an ear with his bill, pullin' manfully. Tommy had swallered the dog's stumpy tail, and Bob was dragging hair out of the enemy like an Injun dressing hides.

"A bulldog is like an Irishman; he's brave because he don't know any better, and you



"'Searching his soul for sounds to tell how scart he was.'"

can't get any braver than that; but there's a limit, even to lunkheadedness. It bored through that dog's thick skull that he had butted into a little bit the darnedest hardest streak of petrified luck that anything on legs could meet with.

"'By-by,' says he to himself. 'Outdoors will do for me!' And here he comes! Neither the visitor nor me was expecting him. He knocked the feet out from under us and sat his master on top. We got up in time to see a winged bulldog, with a tail ten foot long, bounding merrily over the turf, searching his soul for sounds to tell how scart he was, whilst a desperate bobcat, spitting fire and brimstone, threw dirt fifty foot in the air trying to lay claws on him.

"As they disappeared over the first rise, I rolls me a cigarette and lights it slowly.

"'Just by way of curiosity,' says I, 'how much will you take for your dog?'

"'My Heavens!' says he, recovering the power of speech. 'What kind of animal was that?'

"'Come in,' says I, 'and take a drink—you need it.'

"So we gathered up the ruins and tidied things some, while the new man sipped his whisky.

"'My!' says he of a sudden. 'I must go after my poor dog.'

"I sort of warmed to him at that. 'Dog's all right,' says I. 'He'll shake 'em loose and be home in no time. Now you tell me about them sheep.'

"'Sheep?' says he, putting his hand to his head. 'What was it about sheep?'

"'Hello in the house!' sings out Billy. 'The children's comin' home!'

"We tumbled out. Sure enough, the warriors was returning. First come the Judge, tougher than rawhide, half walking and half flying, his wings spread out, 'Cree-ing' to himself about bulldogs and their ways; next come Bobby, still sputtering and swearing; and behind ambled Thomas at a lively wriggle, a coy, large smile upon his face.

"'Ur-r-roup! roup!' sounds from the top of the rise. The family halted and turned around, expectin' more pleasure, for there on the top of the hill stood the terrible scart but still faithful bulldog calling for his master to come away from that place quick, before he got killed. But he had one eye open for safety, and when the family stopped, he ducked down behind the hill surprisin'.

"'Well, I must be going,' says the visitor. 'My name's Sett—Algernon Alfred Sett—and I shall be over next week to talk to you about those sheep.'

"'Any time,' says I. 'We'll be here till we have to shovel snow to get at the hay, from the look of things.'

"'Well, I'm very anxious to have a good long talk with you about sheep,' says he. 'I've been informed that you had a long experience in that line in — er — Nevverdah——'

"'Nevverdah?' says I. 'Oh!—Nevada. I beg your pardon—I've got in the habit of pronouncing in that way. It wasn't Nevada, by the way—it was Texas—but that's only a matter of a Europe or so. Yes, I met a

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sheep or two in that country, I'm sorry to say.'

"'I—er—think of engaging in the business, dontcher know,' says he, relaxing into his first method of speech; 'and should like to consult you professionally.'

"'All right, sir!' says I. 'I'm one of the easiest men to consult west of any place east. Can't you stay now and get the load off your mind?'

"'Well—*no*,' he says to me very confidentially. 'You see, that dog is a great pet of my wife's, and I'm also afraid she will be a little worried by my long absence, so——'

"'I see, sir—I see,' I answered him. 'Well, come around again, and we'll talk sheep.'

"'Thank you—thank you *so* much,' says he, and pops up on his horse. Then again, without any warning, he broke into a haw-haw-haw! as he threw a glance at the family, who sat around eyeing him. 'You were quite right about that *cat*, you know,' says he. 'Capital! Capital! But a *little* rough on the dog.' And off he goes, bobbity-bob, bobbity-bob.

"'Calling for his master to come away from that place quick.'"

"'Where'd you tag that critter, Red?' says Wind-River. 'My mind's wanderin'.'

"'He come down the draw much the graceful way he's going up it,' says I. 'From where, and why how, I dunno. But I kind of like him against my better instincts, Windy.'

"Windy spit thoughtfully at a fly fifteen foot away. 'I shouldn't have time to hate him much myself,' says he.

"And there you are. That's how I met Brother Sett, and the Big Bend Ranch stuck her head out of the shell."

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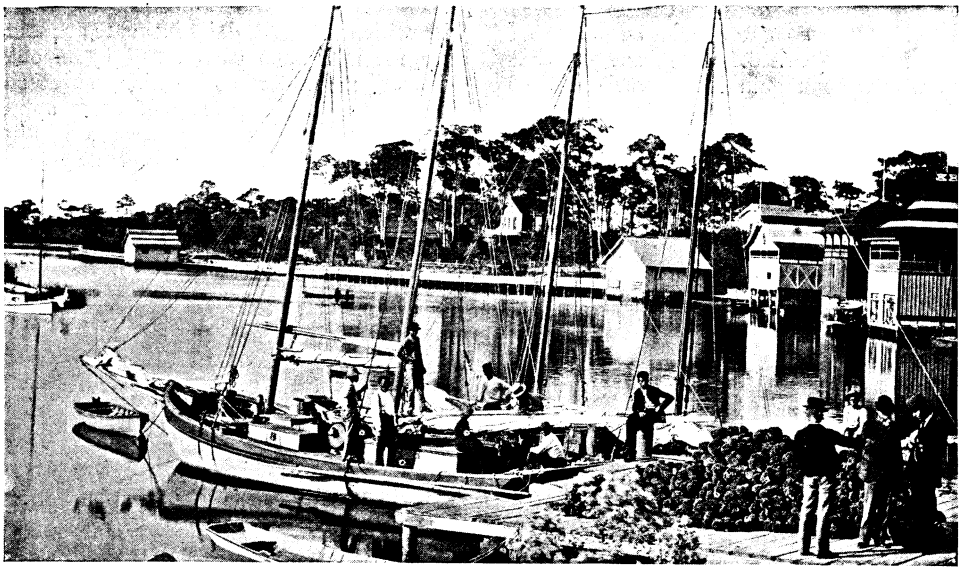


LANDING-STAGE OF A SPONGE-FISHERY ON THE COAST OF FLORIDA.

THE SPONGE-FISHING INDUSTRY.

BY M. DINORBEN GRIFFITH AND DR. SAWYER.

TO most of us the sponge is merely a necessary adjunct of the toilet, but to such scientists as Haeckel, Maas, Delarge, Leuckart, Sollas, and Bütschli, its classification in the animal world has for long been a subject of anxious speculation.

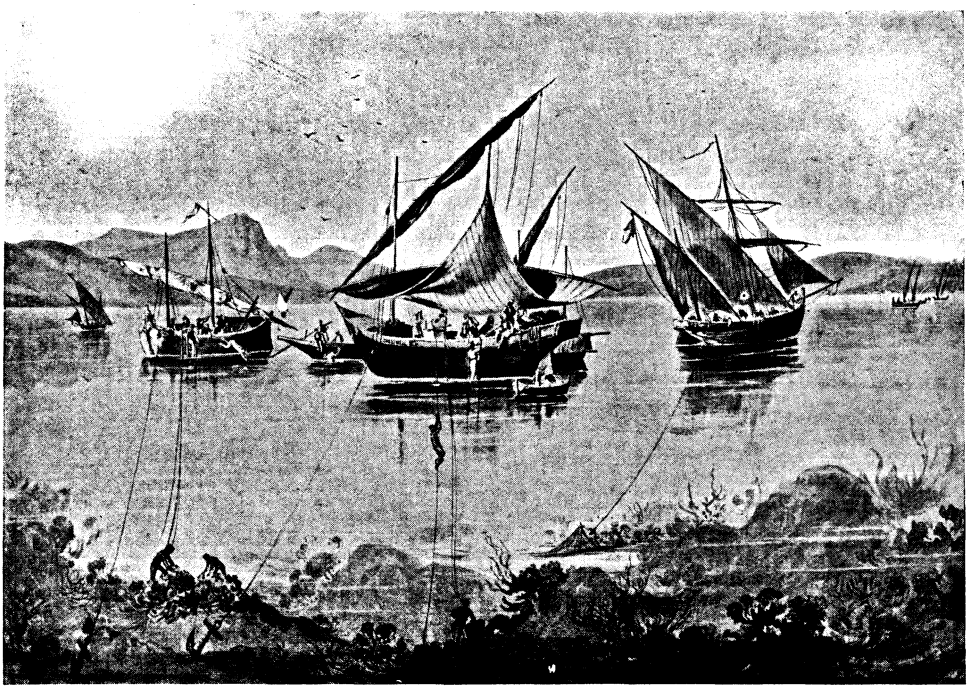
Formerly, there was scarcely any problem in natural history more puzzling and obscure than the development of sponges; but researches into science have brought order out of chaos, and rendered it possible to trace a common plan of evolution through the various types of this peculiar animal organism. That it possesses a nervous system, as was once so much advertised by the supposed discoveries of Stewart and Von Leudenfeld, is now discredited, but it is universally acknowledged to possess a gastral organism and, with few exceptions, a perfect calcarous, horny or flinty skeleton which is intersected by small tubes. These form a canal system and supply nourishment to the living mass of cells of which the organism is composed, and through these tubes unceasingly pour a continual incurrent and excurrent of fluid.

Recent discoveries in sponge embryology have a very considerable bearing upon the problem of the position of sponges in the animal kingdom, and says Mr. Minchin, Joddrel Professor of Zoology and Comparative Anatomy at University College, London: "Although it cannot be said that any one theory of their actual place in Nature is as yet definitely proved and established to the exclusion of any other, it is at least possible to narrow the controversy and to eliminate that view in particular which has hitherto been most dominant in zoological literature, the theory, especially associated with the names of Leuckart and Haeckel, that sponges are to be included in a philogenitic sense among the cœlentera"; and probably the nearest classification that can be given of them is this: that they are multi-cellular animals of comparatively low organisation, their place in the animal kingdom being above the protozoa, whilst near to the cœlentera.

So valuable a position have sponges in the commercial world, and so seriously would any diminution in the supply affect a very large industry, that it has even been a subject of serious consideration to scientists as to whether, during the breeding season, a close time should not be established, as is the case with other fisheries, for they consider it to be contrary to the interest of the sponge-

fishery that the sponge should be destroyed before it has spawned. They suggest that there would be a gain if sponges could be protected until the spawning season is passed. They hold unpractical theories that spawn should be reared in aquaria, or that propagation by means of cutting should be essayed; indeed, practical experiments in this last method of cultivation have already been made, but results in these experiments have hitherto not been very satisfactory, as there is great difficulty in attaching the sponge cuttings to their supports, and even the question, so simple and yet so important, as that of the time required for a young sponge to grow to a marketable size, is as yet unanswered. But it is possible that those people who are actually employing themselves, their time and money, in the trade, know more about sponges than do the scientists. They have no fear whatever of any diminution in the supply; and the commercial world generally shrugs its shoulders at the suggestion of Art being called in to aid Nature in her redundance.

When the sponge is brought up alive out of the sea, it in no way resembles the sponge with which we make daily intimate acquaintance, for it is then surrounded by an outer skin or membrane, in which substance, seemingly at the animal's will, pores appear and disappear. Its cavities are filled by a sticky, glutinous fluid of a greyish-brown colour of the consistency of treacle, known to the fishermen as the "milk of the sponge," but the scientific appellation of which is "sarcode." "Sarcode" is, in fact, the only living portion of the animal, and this, when cleared away, leaves the flexible, inorganic skeleton with which we are so familiar.



SPONGE-FISHING IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

From a drawing designed to illustrate the three principal methods in use. From the centre vessel a diver is descending by the special apparatus; on the left naked divers are seen plunging into the sea; and on the right the "trawl" only is at work.

Naturalists place sponges in but two genera—to wit: spongia, which include Turkey toilet sponges; and hippospongia, bath or honeycomb sponges. The Turkey is of a much finer, thicker fibre than is the bath sponge, though this latter is more complicated in structure. The openings in the two cases are not the same; in the Turkey they are oscules, whilst in the honeycomb they are to be looked upon rather as the mouths of cups, since in the walls of the chambers to which these openings lead are to be found the true oscules.

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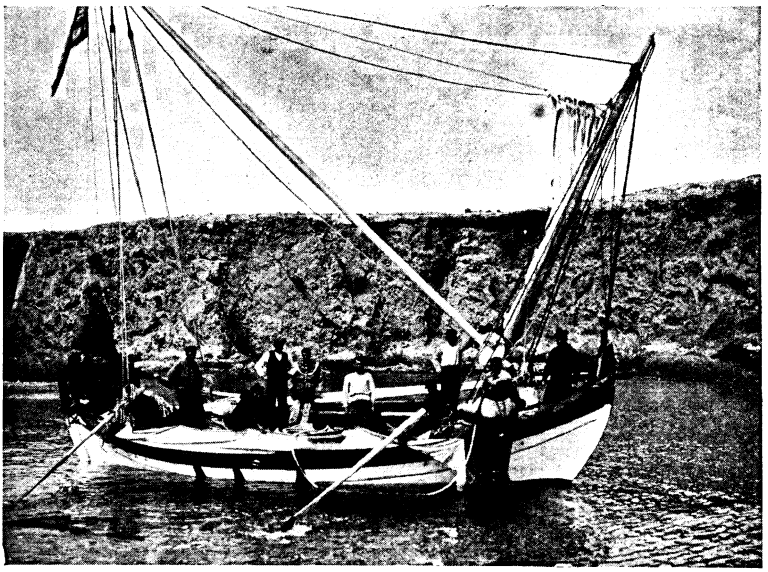
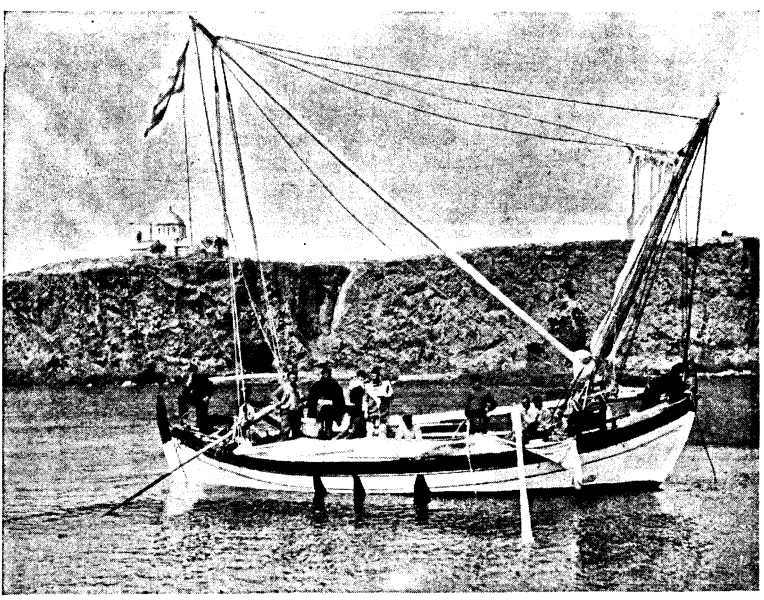
Ægina, the Ægina whose inhabitants were once destroyed by a pestilence, and which was re-peopled by ants, changed into men by Jupiter, according to the fable chronicled by Lemprière, the Ægina of Ovid, the native country and kingdom of Æacus, is now the centre of the sponge industry. Next in importance to it comes Hydra in the Greek Archipelago; and Symi and Calymnos in the Turkish Archipelago; whilst in addition to these places there are large fisheries of sponges in the Bahamas, Cuba, and Florida. Sponge is found also in the North Pacific, South Atlantic, and Indian Oceans, on the shores of Australia and round the South Caroline Islands. Its distribution, therefore, may be considered as world-wide.



LOWERING A DIVER IN THE ÆGEAN SEA.
Another diver is seen ready, dressed, to follow.

But it is the tideless waters of the Mediterranean which lend themselves best both to the cultivation and obtainment of this valuable organism, and it is at Ægina that Messrs. Cresswell Brothers and Schmitz, the great international sponge importers, of Red Lion Square, London, have established their chief buying depôt.



WAITING FOR A DIVER'S REAPPEARANCE.

The securing of the spoil and the manner in which it is carried out are interesting, and probably but little known in this country. There are three ways of collecting sponges: by diving—the method practised in the Mediterranean; dredging, as on the west coast of Asia Minor in winter; and by grappling or hooking. This latter is the most primitive and ancient of methods. It is the mode invariably followed in the Bahamas, where dredging is forbidden by law.

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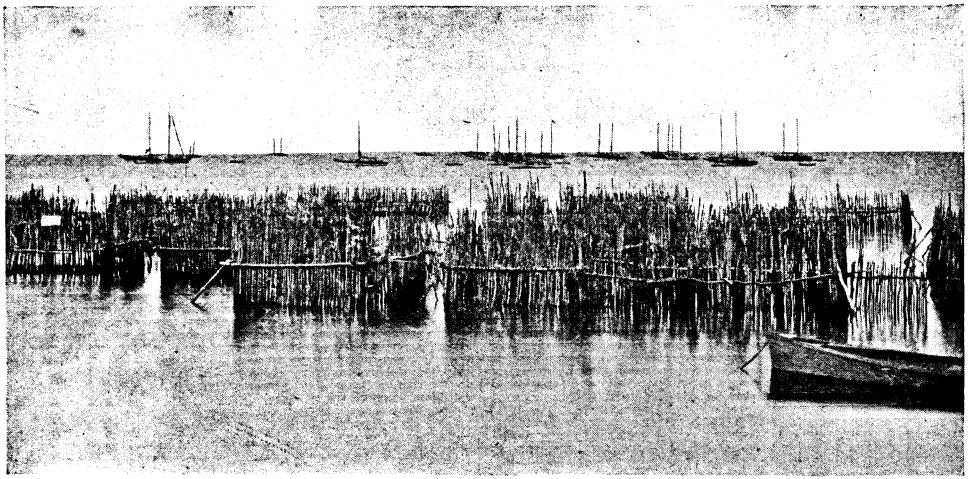
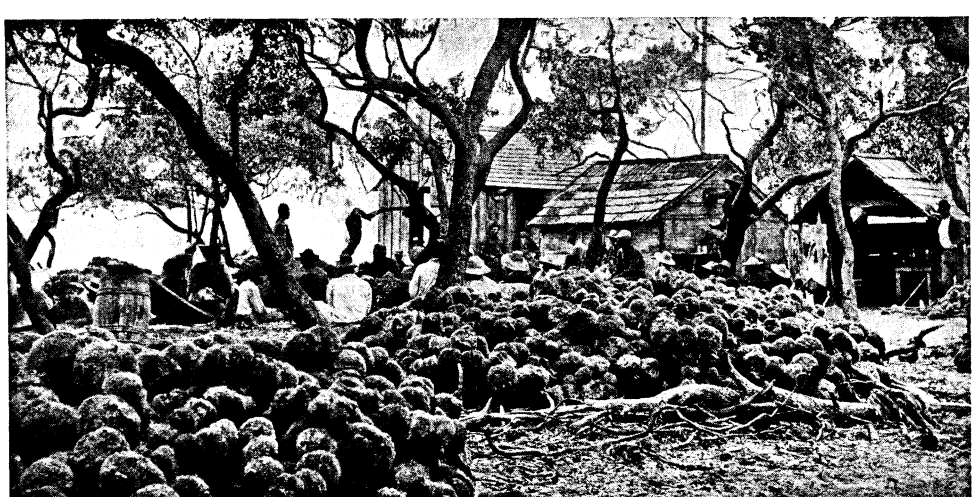


"CRAWL" USED BY FISHERMEN FOR PARTIALLY CLEANING SPONGES BY THE ACTION OF THE SEA.

Sponge-gathering is open to all, not even a licence being necessary, so that anyone who is possessed of sufficient capital to purchase the necessary boats and outfit is able to engage in the trade. Some idea of the magnitude of the risks may be gathered from the fact that no insurance company is willing to undertake them.

But the divers, well aware of the dangers of their trade, undertake their task entirely of their own free will, in the hope of gain and with a trust in Providence which is shown by a very practical form of gratitude towards their Church. It is customary when the sponge-fishery season opens, for the first-fruits of the sea, presumably the first haul of sponges, to be given as a thank-offering to their Church by those employed in the fleet, and on one occasion—some fifteen years ago—when the boats of Messrs. Cresswell Brothers and Schmitz were off the island of Eubœa in the Ægean sea, the diver, making his first descent into the water, discovered, at about twenty fathoms, the largest piece of black coral ever known. The usual traditions being followed, the Greek Church benefited to no inconsiderable extent before the enormous specimen—the branches extend over five feet square—found its present resting-place in the Natural History Section of the British Museum. After a season's work a diver presents an extraordinary appearance, for the skin of his face and shoulders is usually peeled off by



IN A SPONGE-FISHERY YARD: A NEGRO PREACHER ADDRESSING HIS FELLOW-FISHERMEN.

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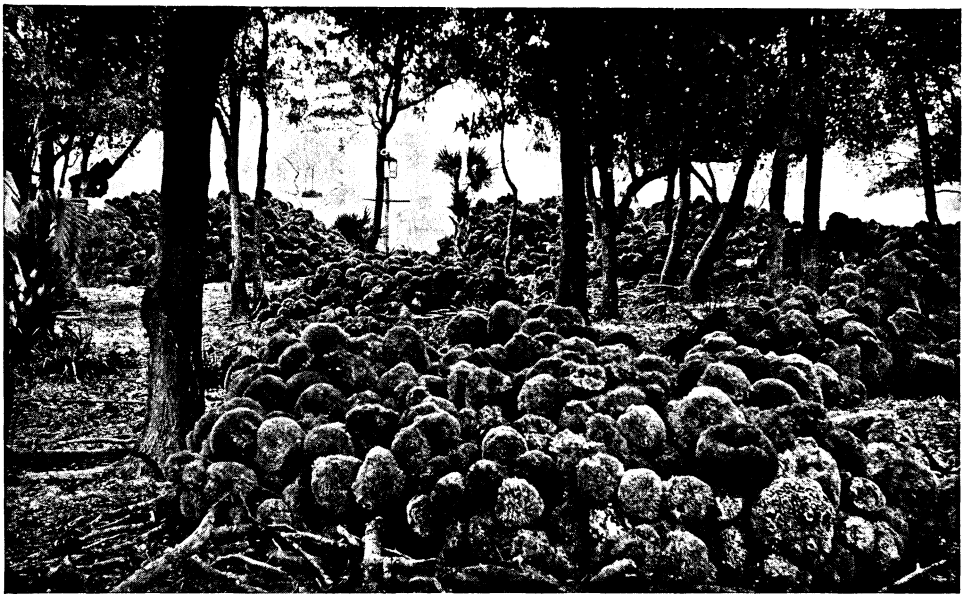

A FLORIDA LANDING-PLACE FOR THE SPONGE HARVEST.

the combined action of sun and salt water; whilst the colour of his hair is turned to a greenish tint. The men go down into the sea either in diving dress or stripped. In the latter case the diver holds, at arm's length in front of him, a broad, flat stone of marble which weighs about 25 lb. This stone serves three purposes: to guide his flight through the water, to protect his head when he first strikes its surface, and to keep him down when he walks the bottom of the sea. But as a preliminary he stands up in the boat, inflates his chest to the utmost for some minutes, and when his lungs are thoroughly oxygenated, he seizes the stone and plunges headlong into the sea. Two minutes is the usual duration of the dive, three and a half the tether of endurance;

SPONGES SPREAD OUT TO DRY.

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for the tremendous pressure of the water, at a depth of even fifteen fathoms, is so great as to cause bleeding at the mouth and nose; and it is only the most experienced and well-seasoned divers who can attempt the longer periods. His equipment besides the stone consists of the end of a rope and a net bag, which latter hangs by a cord round his neck; and it is when this is full of the sponges, which he gathers from the bottom of the sea, that he jerks the rope as a signal for him to be pulled up to the surface.

In the Mediterranean a diving apparatus

HONEYCOMB SPONGE.

is also frequently used, whilst in the West Indies this is not allowed, for there the coral reefs are of almost immeasurable depth, and the use of such an apparatus is consequently excessively dangerous.

The method of harpooning, less in favour in the Mediterranean than in other sponge-fisheries, is probably seen at its best in the Bahamas. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine a prettier scene than Nassau harbour on a fine, sunny morning, when the fleet of sponge-vessels—numbering over five hundred schooners, and two thousand eight hundred boats, and employing over five thousand men and boys—are starting for the fishing-ground.

The schooners, scattering as they leave the harbour, select each their own particular anchoring-ground, the coolies on the ships having been hard at work preparing meals for their respective crews.

The schooners, graceful little craft, built like yachts of wood, copper sheathed and clamped, are each followed by a train of from five to twenty-five rowing-boats varying in number in proportion to the tonnage of their leader, which ranges from six to fifty tons.

To an onlooker the scene is entrancing—the calm, clear waters; the boats with their dusky occupants occasionally silhouetted on the horizon; the parent vessels, their sides glittering in the sun, as if coated with gold, form an almost perfect picture.

To the outsider, too, the life appears to be ideally healthy – almost idyllic; but in truth it must be confessed that the life of a sponger is not an entirely enviable one. His life is one of hard work; his fare is of the coarsest. Rice, hominy, *very* little salt pork, and flour are the usual provisions stocked; flour is the most important, and an absolute necessity when hard work is expected; and the sponge-fishers, beyond a meal before starting work, and one in the evening when they return to the schooner, get nothing between but bread and water. The hardships on board of the vessel in which they live are, in point of fact, very considerable, and—as will be explained later—the accommodation on board the schooners is not strictly reserved for the captains, mates, cooks, and crews.

Every boat carries two men—or, more correctly speaking, a man and a boy—the

"GRASS" AND "YELLOW" SPONGES.

latter sitting in the stern to scull. The man, known as the hooker, takes his place in the bow, armed with a water-glass or sea-telescope, and a hook, three or two pronged, according to taste, mounted on a long pole. Captain, mate, and crew all participate in the fishing, and the schooner is left in charge of the cook, who tidies up and bakes and prepares the evening meal. The hooker at the bow rests his water-glass—which is a bucket with a glass bottom—on the surface of the water, and he, by means of it, is able to see into the water to a depth of thirty feet. As

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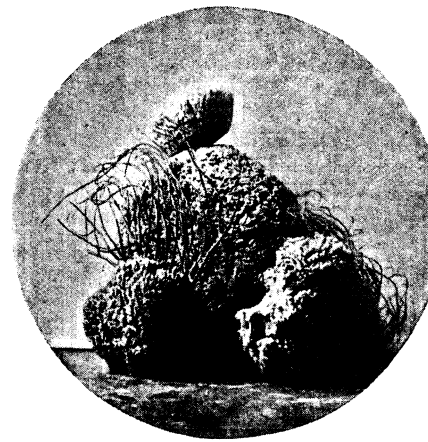
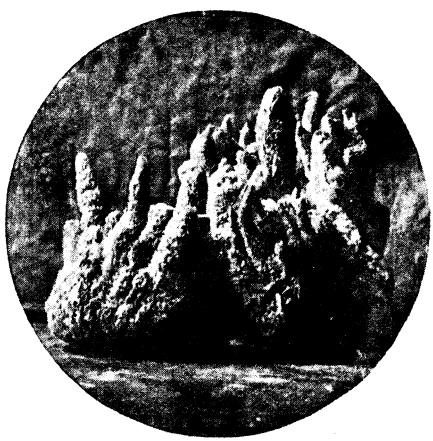
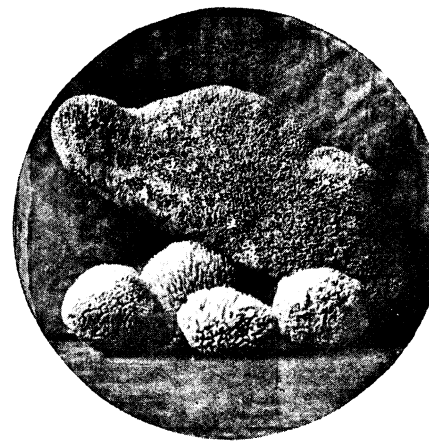
FLORIDA GRASS CUP.



SHEEP'S WOOL.



WOOL "FINGER."



VELVET.

ELEPHANT'S EAR.

ZIMOCCA OR BROWN TURKEY.

SOME LEADING VARIETIES OF SPONGE.

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soon as he finds his prey—the sponges—he detaches them with his hook and hauls them into the boat. The sculler moves by his directions, and the fishing continues throughout the day. The hooker holds a very arduous position, and the continuous use of the water-glass causes blindness to be a common infirmity among the sponge-hookers.

When the boats are loaded with sponge, and the day is drawing to a close, the schooner picks them up one by one; the sponges are roughly thrown on the deck of the schooner for the sponge animal to die, which it usually does in the sun in from twenty-four to thirty-six hours. At this stage the sponges are black and covered with a whity-grey slime, and, as may be imagined, the odour emitted as soon as decomposition sets in is almost indescribable.

ANTIQUE VASE (ABOUT 200 B.C.) BROUGHT UP FROM THE SEA WITH A FINE SPONGE ATTACHED.

The second and following days are as the first, and the schooner-deck becomes piled up with masses of what looks like clotted blood, and the stench becomes more and more intolerable. At the end of a week the schooner goes to "crawl" and discharges her noisome cargo. A crawl is a staked enclosure in shallow waters where the sponges are placed. At every subsequent visit of the schooner to "crawl" the crew are engaged for some hours in beating the sponges with stakes until finally no trace is left of the former occupants, and the skin and other soft tissues are entirely removed. The skeletons are then almost ready for market, cleansed from all impurities.

The Mediterranean methods of dealing with the sponge tend to a better curing of it than those described above; for the outer membrane is removed immediately the sponge is fished, as it is found that where this is not done, fermentation followed by speedy putrefaction sets in, and from being tough and elastic, it becomes soft and flabby, and with the least pressure the fermented juice oozes out, giving off a most offensive odour. The organic part of the sponge, it will thus be seen, is best removed from it shortly after it is taken from its bed. This has to be done on the fishing-grounds, sometimes long before the boats return to port. As this process is necessarily rude and incomplete, it has to be supplemented by a more careful bleaching process when the sponges are received by the sponge merchant, who sees that they are cleansed, dried, threaded on strings according to grade, before being baled for export.

And the grading is a very serious matter, since there are from the Mediterranean the Mandroucha, Bengazi, Greek, Pantellaria, Tripoli, Gerbis growths, which allow of special subdivisions into the fine Turkeys, the White Turkey Flats, the Brown Turkeys, the Zimocca, the Elephant's Ear, the Cups, the Solids and the Flats—some of which are included in the best, the Mollissima group.

Florida yields the Grass, the Yellow, the Sheep's Wool, and the Velvet, its representative of the fine Turkey being the Grass, usually cup-shaped.

The Bahamas yield the Reef, the Glove, a couple of Zimocca varieties—the Hard Head and Corlosia, the Yellow, the Grass, the Sheep's Wool, two Velvets—the Cay and the Abaco.

Cuban and other waters, from which sponges are got, yield sundry though fewer varieties of the above.

For our illustrations, as also for much interesting information incorporated in this article, we are indebted to the courtesy of Messrs. Cresswell Brothers and Schmitz, at whose London offices every variety of sponge known to commerce may be found in sundry stages of treatment or result. Every process that the sponge has to undergo is conducted here, so that the raw sponges can be seen side by side with the clean and trimmed products. A walk through the various departments where this process is carried on

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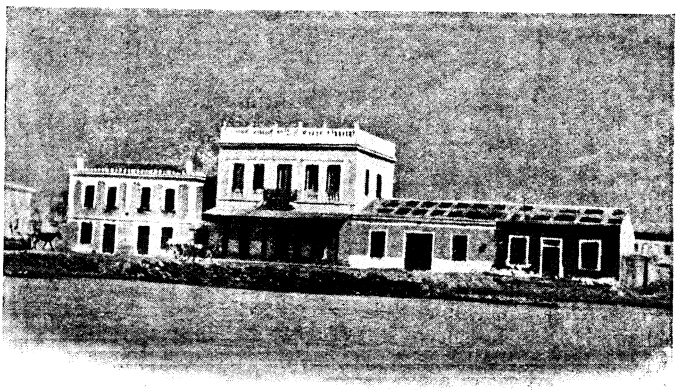
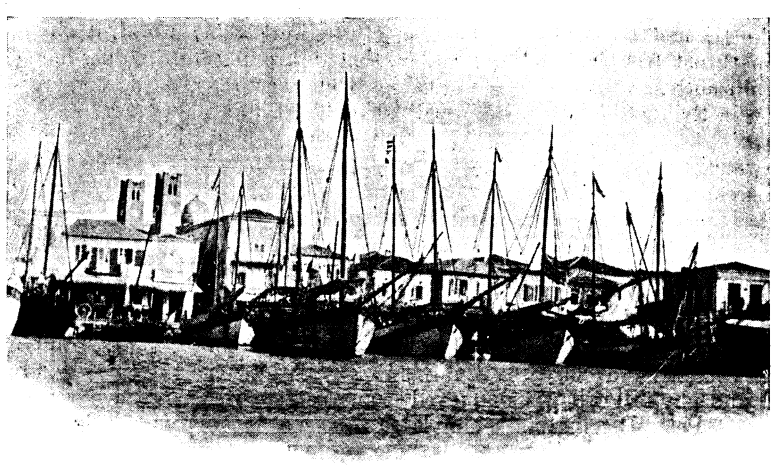
is most instructive, and it is very interesting to watch the gradual process of the preparation, from the unbaling of the raw, compressed goods to the casing of the finished product, which can be examined in detail. The bleaching, in which permanganate of potash plays the most important part, drying, sorting, stringing, carding, and other operations are carried on here on a large scale.

Of special interest is a drying system lately installed. A 10 h.p. nominal vertical boiler occupies one corner of the engine-room, the base of the chimney-shaft, 4 ft. square and 70 ft. high, occupying the adjacent corner. On one side of the room is a 5 h.p. nominal horizontal steam-engine, driving two lines of shafting, one overhead, the other underground, in a brick and concrete trench, which, passing right under the yard, terminates in the bleaching-room, where it supplies the necessary motive power to two sets of indiarubber rollers for squeezing as much water as possible out of the sponges after their final washing, preparatory to the drying process.



THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE GREEK SPONGE TRADE: THE OFFICES OF MESSRS. CRESSWELL BROTHERS AND SCHMITZ AT ÆGINA.



THE SPONGE-FISHING FLEET IN HARBOUR AT ÆGINA.

The exhaust steam from the engine is completely utilised in the following manner.

It passes in the first place through an oil-separator. After leaving the oil-separator, the steam passes on to the air-condenser above the engine. This is a hollow iron case, in size only about one cubic yard, containing a large number of hollow, stamped steel plates united together by the edges in pairs, forming four series of hollow elements, and all communicating with each other. Although the plates are only of the thickness of stout brown paper or thin card, and steel is one of the highly infusible metals, they are melted together on the edges by the use of an acetylene flame raised to the temperature of 5,200° by a jet of oxygen gas stored in cylinders at the pressure of 1,800 lb. to the square inch. This heat is so perfectly under control, and can be used so accurately, that the thin steel sheets can be worked in any desired manner by its use. On one side of the case a small fan, whose periphery is revolving at the velocity of over 150 miles an hour, drives thousands of cubic feet of air per minute into the outer case of the air-condenser. The current of air, heated to any requisite degree by the heat given up by the steam, passes down a duct in one corner of the engine-room, and through an underground duct to the drying-room, where it can be distributed exactly as may be required, thus ensuring an extremely rapid drying in a continuous stream of fresh, warm, dry air.

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THE SPECULATIONS OF JACK STEELE.

By ROBERT BARR.*

V.—THIRD AND LAST TIME—GONE.

JACK STEELE'S friends were amazed to find him back in town almost within a week after he had left with such lavish preparations for a long stay in the wilderness. It was difficult for him to offer an adequate explanation, and it grew to be most annoying, once he had constructed his excuses, to be compelled to repeat them to every friend he met, and listen without cursing to the inane advice given by people who didn't in the least know what they were talking about.

"What! back already?" cried Richard K. Vernon, vice-president of the Wheat Belt Line, Jack's oldest friend and former chief, who had offered to place a private car at his disposal if he would keep close to the railway. Vernon held that camping out in a private car was the right way to do it, and that a canvas tent was a delusion and a snare. "Back already?" exclaimed this genial man. "Why, Jack, you look as haggard as if you'd been through a panic in the wheat market. Didn't the mountains agree with you?"

"No," said Jack shortly and truthfully; "threatened to develop throat trouble," and he tapped his neck significantly.

"How long were you in the mountains?"

"Five days."

"Oh, well, I told you how it would be before you left. That's what comes of sleeping in a cot-bed, over damp ground, under thin canvas. You should have taken both my advice and my private car; then you could have carried all the comforts of town with you."

Now that the immediate tension of the crisis had relaxed, John Steele found himself very close to a mental and physical collapse. It was true that the great Peter Berrington was dead, but the elation which that startling piece of news had first caused subsided long before he reached the city. Men die, but systems remain. Had the shadow of Peter Berrington been lifted, after all, even though Peter himself was now a shadow? The grotesque uncertainty of the situation was making rags of John Steele's nerves. Even as he walked through the crowded streets he had to fight down an impulse to shriek aloud, raising his hands to heaven and crying—

"In Heaven's name, if you're going to do anything, do it *now*, and let's have it over!"

It was not that he shrank from ruin, or even from death, both of which he had faced within the past year. It was the uncertainty of when and how the blow was to fall. He began to fear that something worse than either ruin or death would overtake him. In the privacy of his own room he would sometimes march up and down with set teeth and clenched fists, saying to himself—

"You must quit thinking of this, or you'll go mad," and yet with all his strength of mind he could not stop his planning to circumvent the unseen danger which threatened him.

The fantastic nature of the peril that surrounded him was such that if it were made public, he would be laughed at from one end of the country to the other. In a busy, practical, work-a-day world, it was incredible that a group of men, only one of whom he had ever seen, and that most casually, should sit in a sky-scraper in New York and actually plan the murder of a young man in Chicago; for this group of men were churchgoers, Sunday-school teachers, philanthropists who had founded colleges, bestowers of charity on a scale of munificence hitherto unexampled. And yet more potent than all these things was the fact that they were hard-headed business men, the most successful business men in the world, intent on their own affairs, and naturally far removed from any thought of revenge, for the simple reason that revenge is not business, and there is no money in it. It was quite true that this same group, in early days, had been accused of burning rival factories, of inciting riots, and of many other crimes against the peace and security of the commonwealth, but these things had never been legally proven or brought home to the group by irrefutable evidence. Where investigation had followed crime, and the inquiry was not quashed, it had always been shown that the

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rash acts were the work of over-zealous *employés* exceeding their instructions. The hands of the financial group in the tall building on Broadway were clean. No band of Quakers were more set against violence than these mild-mannered men in New York. If Jack Steele had told the story of the attempted lynching among the Black Hills, the incredulous public would have looked upon the affair as a practical joke played by humorous mountaineers on a tenderfoot from the east. No one knew better than Jack Steele that to connect Dakota Bill of the Black Hills with Nicholson of New York was an impossibility. He was certain that the miners knew nothing of Nicholson; that they held a genuine lynching grievance against the owner of the mine, whoever he was, and that they were acting quite naturally according to their instincts when this supposed owner had fallen into their hands.

"He could not stop his planning to circumvent the unseen danger which threatened him."

Alice Fuller, who led him so easily into the trap, as the tame animal in the stockyards leads its fellows to the slaughter-pen—she, of course, knew for whom she was acting, but Jack doubted if this knowledge led by any followable clue to Nicholson. When he thought of the handsome girl, he shuddered; and, for ten thousand reasons, that episode must never become public. To be hoodwinked by a pretty woman was merely to join the procession of fools that extended from the time of Adam to the year 1905.

It was difficult for Jack Steele to cease his thoughts of the Amalgamated Soap combination, for the papers continued full of Peter Berrington and the financial upheaval which his sudden death was certain to cause. The imagination of the world was touched by the fact that this tremendous power which Peter Berrington had wielded in ever-increasing force for nearly half a century now lapsed into the hands of a girl, Constance Berrington, aged twenty-four, the only child of the billionaire. The newspapers printed column after column about this young lady, who appeared to be even more of a recluse than her father was. They published portraits of her, no two alike—pictures ranging from the most beautiful woman in Christendom to the most gaunt and ugly hag; which seemed to indicate that photographs of Miss Constance were unobtainable, and that the artists drew on their imagination as well as on their Whatman pads. She avoided society, was never seen at such resorts as Newport or Lennox; she took no part in the festivities of a great city, and believed that the door of a theatre was the gate of hell. Gossip said she was haunted by a fear of being married for her money, and so at this early age had become a man-hater. It was also alleged that she had a conscience, a possession with which her father had never been credited even by the wildest imaginative writer. She was going to devote her life and her billions as far as possible to the undoing of the harm which her parent had accomplished.

"She is fanatically religious," proclaimed one newspaper.

"She is a plain, commonplace girl," said another, "whose father has bequeathed her his cash, but not his brains."

When Jack Steele found he could not cease thinking over his paralysing situation, which had entirely emasculated his initiative and wrecked his business career; when he

feared lunacy awaited him, he resolved to meet this girl, and persuade her, if he could, to stop the huge, golden Juggernaut which threatened to crush the life or reason out of him. Yet it seemed cowardly for a grown man to make such an appeal to a young girl who was an entire stranger to him, and who, if he actually succeeding in reaching her presence, would most likely feel indignant and insulted that such crimes as he placed before her without the slightest proof should be attributed to her father. Thus his interview would doubtless end with his being turned out of the house by the servants. Then again, even if she believed him—and the chances were only as one in ten thousand—had she the actual as well as the nominal power to stop the persecution? Was she like the Czar of Russia, helplessly at the head of an organisation over whose movements the supposed chief had no control?

Yet, after all, Jack Steele had not gone so far towards insanity as to be in any error regarding the real mover in the conspiracies of which he was the victim. Nicholson was the man; there could be no doubt of that. Twice Steele had beaten Nicholson to the ground. In the great wheat deal he had exposed his treachery and dishonesty, had publicly shown him to be an unscrupulous scoundrel, had prevented him from making millions in a single coup, which was all prepared and certain to succeed had not Steele disarranged the machinery. He had humiliated the man personally, wounding his pride and crushing his self-esteem. Was it possible, then, ever to make terms with one naturally so embittered? Steele braced himself up and resolved to try. Twice he had defeated him, and there remained in Jack's hand the powerful weapon of publicity. After all, could Amalgamated Soap risk such an exposure as it was in Jack's power to cast forth to the eager Press of the country? Was it so certain that the public would not believe the story he might tell regarding Amalgamated Soap? Even though Nicholson was imbued with malice, his colleagues would be more reasonable, more amenable to persuasion. They might induce this angry man to refrain from tempting the avalanche. He resolved to propose a treaty of peace with Nicholson. Then came the doubt. Should Nicholson agree to such a pact, would he keep it? Would he merely use it as a sedative to lull his intended victim into false security? Such an outcome was very likely; still, a frank talk with Nicholson could do no harm, and Steele had not the slightest intention of being lulled into security by anything Nicholson might say. Recalling to his mind the stony countenance of that human sphinx, Steele could not delude himself that any appeal to conscience or any plea for mercy would have the least chance of success. Nicholson was as unemotional as the Pyramids; Steele could make no bargain with such a man unless he had something to offer. Therefore he did not go impetuously to New York and fling himself at the feet of Nemesis. He set about the preparation of the goods he would trade with this white Indian. It gratified him to think that after all these months of doubt and uncertainty he could at last come to a definite decision about anything.

There were no women in Jack Steele's office. His confidential stenographer was a quiet man a little older than himself, named Henry Russell. Steele touched an electric button on his desk, and Russell came in, note-book in hand.

"Sit down, Russell. If I remember rightly, you were connected with a newspaper in your early days?"

"In a very humble capacity, sir; I was merely a reporter."

"Oh, don't say merely. A reporter is ever so much more important than an editorial writer. Have you ever attempted a novel?"

"No, sir."

"Still, you know something of literary form and the way a book is put together, I suppose?"

"I know nothing about the writing of books, sir. I think I have a fair knowledge of how a sentence should read."

"Well, that's the main thing. Still, as a reporter you must have seen a good deal of the seamy side of life, and later you have had to do with important business affairs, even since you came into my employ."

"That is very true, Mr. Steele."

"Don't you think you could concoct the plot of a novel? A novel of every-day business life, let us say, like one of those that have been so successful lately—a book pulsating with the greed of gold, and all that sort of thing, you know? Unscrupulous men, and perhaps an adventuress here and there, of perfectly stunning beauty. For instance, someone resembling that girl who came in to see me a fortnight ago."

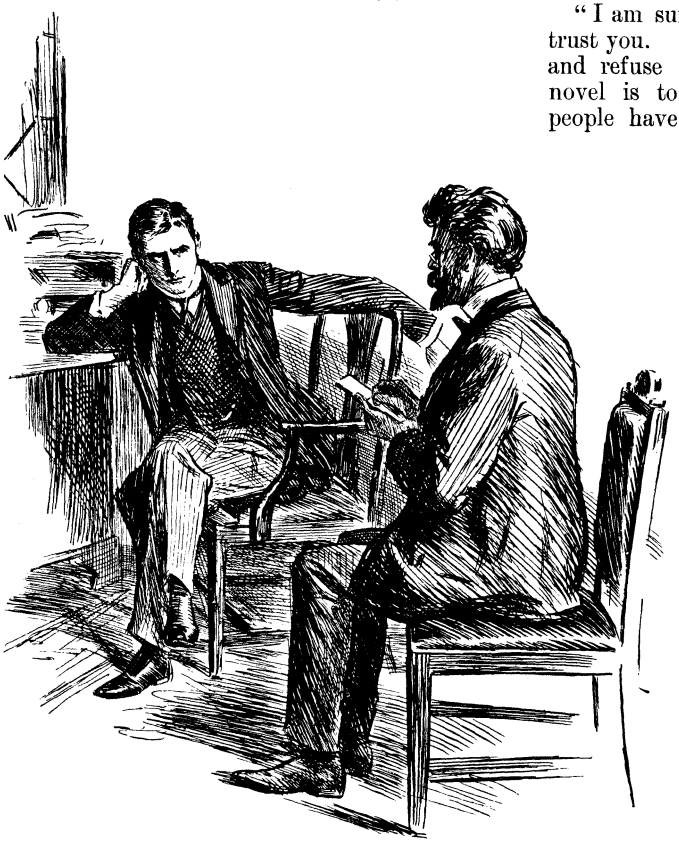
"Yes, I remember her. She was good looking."

"An amazing beauty, I thought her," said Steele, thrusting his hands into his trousers

pockets and marching up and down the room. "Well, couldn't such a belle of the markets as that inspire you towards the writing of a great work of fiction?"

Russell shook his head. "I'm afraid not, Mr. Steele."

"There's nothing much doing just now,"



"'Have you ever attempted a novel?'"

continued the promenading man. "At this present moment I intended to be off on my vacation, but I found the mountains too exciting—er—too dull, I mean—and so you see I am back among you earlier than I expected. Now, Russell, between ourselves, there is nothing more absurd than for a successful business man to attempt the writing of a novel. Yet I'm the sort of person who cannot remain idle, and there is nothing in sight to do for a month or two. I'm going to while away the time by composing a business novel, and I want you to assist me. I'll dictate the thing straight off to you, and you must invent the names and kick the sentences into shape."

"I'll do my best, sir."

"And remember, Russell, of all the confidential transactions you've been called upon to perform, this is the one in which I demand the utmost secrecy. I should be the laughing-stock of the town if it once got out that I were plunging into fiction instead of into wheat."

"I'll never breathe a whisper of it, sir."

"I am sure you won't, and that is why I trust you. Now, we'll just lock the doors and refuse ourselves to all comers. If a novel is to be a success nowadays, when people have so much to read and so little time for reading, it must be as sensational as possible, and I think I can do the trick. Anyhow, if it fails, there's no great harm done, and for a time we two will court that seclusion which I read in the papers all true literary men surround themselves with."

The two men worked together day after day, until the first draft of the history was completed and typed; then they revised this copy very thoroughly, and Steele directed that duplicates should be made, with blanks left for all proper names. He professed himself dissatisfied with the titles they had invented, and said that while the final manuscript was being prepared, he would concoct more suitable appellations for his main characters, and insert them with his own hand. This final revision was accomplished by John Steele alone, when he inserted the real names; then with his own hand he wrote the following letter to Stoliker, editor of the *Chicago Daily Mail*:—

"My dear Stoliker,—

"If the accompanying manuscript ever comes into your possession, I want you first of all to remember that on a certain night I brought to you a most remarkable article regarding the wheat situation in this country, the truth of which you quite legitimately doubted. After-events proved the accuracy of my statement, and you were thus enabled to score a great triumph for your paper. Believe me, then, when I tell you that every word here typed is true; for when you read the accompanying pages, I shall not be by your side to use arguments in favour of its publication. I shall either have

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disappeared or, more probably, I shall be dead. In either case, this manuscript, every name in which is real, will give you a clue to the disaster which has overtaken me. In the meantime I remain,

"Your friend,

"JOHN STEELE."

This letter and the manuscript he wrapped up into a parcel, which he securely sealed. On the outside he wrote instructions that in the case of his death or disappearance the package was to be handed intact to Stoliker, of the *Chicago Daily Mail*. The other package, with a duplicate of the letter to Stoliker, was placed in the vault of a depository, supposed to be the greatest strong-room in the city, which he afterwards learned, with some amusement, belonged to Amalgamated Soap. The thin key and the code word which opened this receptacle he placed in a sealed envelope which he left with his lawyers, with instructions to forward the envelope to Stoliker in case of his death or disappearance.

All this accomplished to his satisfaction, he took the Limited to New York, and entered the tall building on Broadway which was body to the brain that directed the activities of Amalgamated Soap. Asking that his card should be taken to Mr. Nicholson, and replying to an inquiry that he had no appointment, he was taken into a small but richly furnished waiting-room, which he saw to be one of many on the eleventh floor, and there he rested for nearly half an hour before a messenger entered and announced that Mr. Nicholson would be pleased to see him.

Nicholson's room was large and sumptuous, with several windows opening on Broadway. The two financiers, big and little, met on the plane of ordinary politeness, without any effusion of mutual regard on the one hand, or evidence of mutual distrust on the other.

"I have called," said Steele, "to see if we can come to any workable arrangement."

"In what line of activity?" asked Nicholson.

"In a line of passivity rather than of activity," explained Steele, with a smile. "When I was a youngster, and engaged in a fight, it was etiquette that as soon as the under boy hollaed 'Enough!' the fellow on top ceased pummelling him. I have come all the way from Chicago to cry 'Enough!'"

Nicholson's eyebrows rose very slightly.

"I fear I do not understand you, Mr. Steele."

"Oh, yes, you do. It will save your time, which I know to be valuable, if we take certain things for granted. When we first met, I was so unfortunate as to find myself opposed to you. I admit frankly that I entirely underestimated your genius and your power. Since then, on one occasion you came within an ace of ruining me. On a second and more recent occasion you came within an ace of causing my death. Now, I have called at the captain's office to settle. In the language of the wild and woolly west, my hands are up, and you have the drop on me. What are your terms?"

For a few moments Nicholson regarded his visitor with an expression in which mild surprise was mingled with equally mild anxiety. When at last he spoke, his voice was perceptibly lowered, as if he addressed an invalid in a sick-room.

"You are not looking very well, Mr. Steele?"

"No, nor feeling well, either, Mr. Nicholson."

"I am sorry to hear it. What is the trouble?"

"Amalgamated Soap, I should say," said John, with a dreary laugh. "Excellent for the complexion, but mighty bad for the nerves."

"I shall make no pretence of misunderstanding your meaning, Mr. Steele," Nicholson went on with the patient enunciation one uses towards an unreasonable child. "You are hinting that in revenge for fancied opposition on your part, either I personally, or the Company with which I am associated, or both, have entered into a conspiracy, first to rob, and secondly to murder you. I hesitate to speak so bluntly, but, as you quite sensibly remark, we should be frank with each other."

"Your bluntness is more than compensated for by your accuracy, Mr. Nicholson. What you describe is exactly what you have done. Mere accident saved me from ruin in the Consolidated Beet Sugar formation. Less than a month ago I was led across the plains by one of your minions—a most charming, beautiful, and fascinating young woman—into a death-trap, from which I escaped largely through my own ingenuity. Now, I have written down a rather vivid and strictly accurate account of these doings. I have put in your name, and that of Amalgamated Soap, and my own, and there are three copies of this narrative in existence, two of them with a slow match attached which you can very easily light."

"Meaning that this interesting account will appear in print, Mr. Steele?"

"Quite so. Now, I ask you, Mr. Nicholson, is it worth while going any further with this feud? We're not illicit distillers in the mountains trying to pot-shot each other, but two supposedly sane men; and the world is amply wide enough for both. What do you say?"

"Really, Mr. Steele, it's rather difficult to know what to say without seeming impolite. Many things have been printed about Amalgamated Soap during the last twenty years, and so far they have never been replied to, nor have our dividends been adversely affected. A few of the articles I have read. Some were largely statistical, others of a defamatory character, others, again, contained the two qualities combined. But you, Mr. Steele, threaten to inject a most unusual and interesting quality—namely, that of an attractive young man journeying across the prairies with a beautiful and mysterious young woman. If I raised a finger to prevent the publication of a human document so well calculated to touch the better and more sentimental parts of our nature, I should consider that I was depriving my fellow-creatures of a source of pure enjoyment. I believe we sometimes unite beauty and soap in our advertisements. Attractive pictures they are. But this romance of the Black Hills——"

"How do you know it was the Black Hills?" asked Steele quickly.

"Didn't you mention the locality?"

"I said the plains."

"Then I beg pardon—this romance of the plains——"

"Now, stop a moment, Nicholson, just stop where you are. Do you see what a mistake you've made? For your own purpose, whatever it may be, you have been pretending that this human document of mine, as you call it, is a myth. Yet, in the calm and choice language with which you are describing it, you have suddenly given yourself away. You know the mine was in the Black Hills, and, of course, I knew you knew from the very first. Now, let us quit sparring. I asked you what your terms were. I am not using threats at all; I am merely trying to come to an arrangement. Suppose, on the third attack, you succeed in driving me to the wall. What good will it do you?"

"None at all, Mr. Steele, and I assure you I have not the least desire to interfere even in the remotest degree with your affairs. You evidently attribute to me more power than I possess. The undertakings of our association are all matters of mutual arrangement between the directors, of whom I happen to be one. We meet each day at eleven o'clock, and I trust you will believe me when I say that if I proposed to my colleagues either the robbery or murder of Mr. John Steele, I should be very promptly asked to resign my position, and deservedly so. Really, Mr. Steele, if I may make an appeal to your own common sense, you must admit that the building up of the prestige of this company, its successful carrying on, its increase in all parts of the world, are not accomplished by such bizarre devices as you ascribe to us."

"Do you mean to say that you did not, in my own presence, attempt to wreck the Consolidated Beet Sugar Company when you thought I would be ruined by it, and immediately go to allotment when you learned I had escaped the trap?"

"I am very glad you mentioned that, Mr. Steele, because a few simple words will show you that I am not the Machiavelli you suppose me to be. To wreck you I should have had to wreck ourselves to at least an equal amount, and it is not the custom of Amalgamated Soap to purchase revenge at so excessive a price. It is one of our principles never to enter into any company put before the public unless the capital is fully subscribed. To my surprise, I learned that we were a million short, therefore I could not agree to go to allotment."

"But you went to allotment all the same when you learned I was out."

"Pardon me, it was not learning that you were out of it which caused me to change my mind. It was knowing you had sent a letter to the papers informing the public that we were interested in the Consolidated Beet Sugar Company. The moment our good name was involved, I proposed going to allotment; but before doing so, I myself drew my cheque for a million dollars and bought the unsold shares. Your being in or out of the Company had nothing to do with my action."

"You will not come to terms, then?"

"There are no terms to come to."

"Is this your last word, Mr. Nicholson?"

"If you will pardon the liberty I take, Mr. Steele, I shall venture some last words on another subject. As I said when you came in, you are not looking well. Do you know what paranœa means?"

"I do not."

"Then, if you take my advice, you will consult a physician and ask him about it."

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"I'll ask you, to save the physician's fee. What is paranœa?"

"It is a disease of the brain, and its symptom is fear. The victim imagines that someone, or everyone, is plotting against him. All the energies he possesses are directed towards the circumvention of conspiracies that are wholly imaginary. This disease, if not checked, leads to insanity or suicide."

John Steele rose to his feet.

"Does paranœa ever lead to murder, Mr. Nicholson?"

"Quite frequently."

"Then as I understand the directors of Amalgamated Soap are a most piously inclined body, please solicit their prayers that I may not be afflicted with the malady you mention. I thank you for giving me so much of your time, and now bid you 'Good day.'"

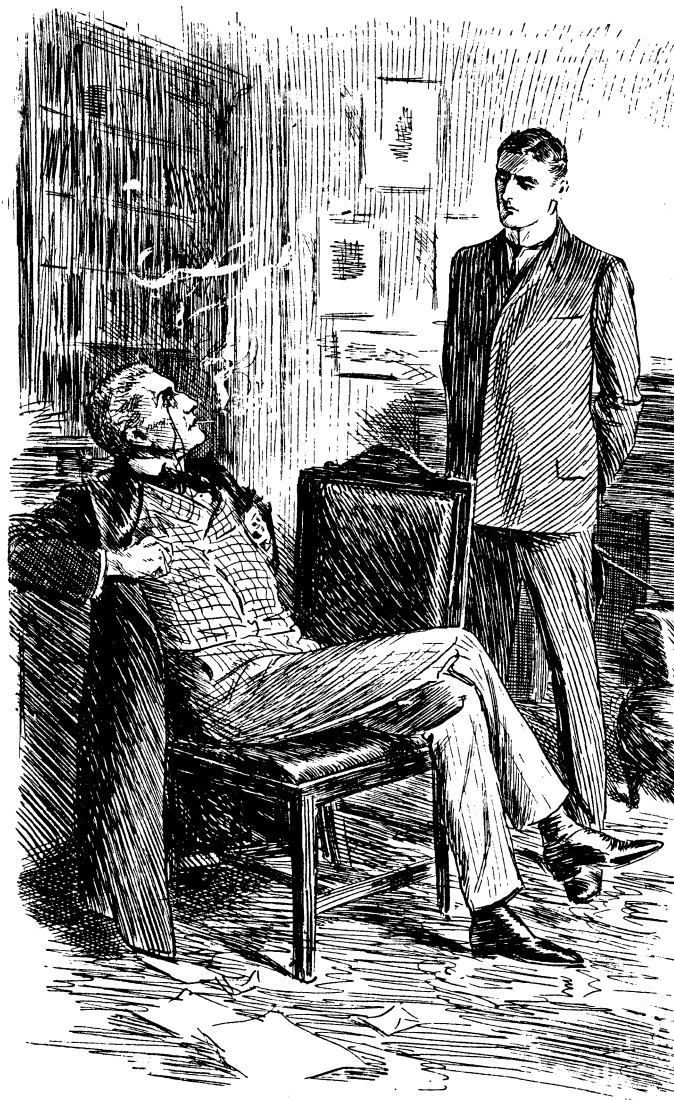
"Good-bye, Mr. Steele," said Nicholson, rising; then speaking in his suavest manner, he said—

"If ever you entertain any project that requires more capital than you can command, I shall be most pleased to submit it to the Board, and perhaps we may be of assistance to you. As I told you before, I have the utmost admiration for your financial ability."

"Thank you, Mr. Nicholson; I shall bear your kind invitation in mind. However, I may inform you that I have entirely dropped out of all speculative business. I am one of the few men who knows when he has had enough. I have accumulated all the money I shall need during my lifetime, and I intend to take care of it."

"A most sensible resolution, Mr. Steele; and once more good-bye, with many thanks for the visit."

John Steele walked up Broadway the most depressed man in New York. His attempted compromise had proven a complete failure, his journey east a loss of time. And yet of what value was time to him, who dared not undertake the most innocent project through fear of the developments that might follow? Nicholson had said that fear was the symptom of the malady he had so graphically depicted. Could it be possible, Steele asked himself, that he was actually the victim of a disease, every indication of which he seemed to possess? Nicholson had evidently planted that thought in his brain to his further disquietude. That man, who rarely allowed a smile to lighten his face, had inwardly laughed at him, flouted him, defied him! and all done with soothing, contemptuous insults.



"'Does paranœa ever lead to murder, Mr. Nicholson?'"

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Steele walked slowly up Broadway until he came to its intersection with Fifth Avenue, and then he followed the latter street, aimlessly making for his hotel. Nevertheless, when he came opposite the hotel, he wandered past it and on up the Avenue. Suddenly he shook himself together and denied the cowardliness which he had hitherto attributed to the design forming in his mind. He would appeal to a woman, and if he could not thus circumvent the demoniac Nicholson, he would go out of business entirely, as he had threatened, and either travel or take up some interesting recreative occupation. He made inquiries, was directed to the Berrington residence, walked up the steps of that palace, and rang the bell. A servant in gorgeous livery opened the door.

"I wish to speak with Miss Berrington," he said.

"Not at 'ome, sir," was the curt answer.

Steele put his hand in his pocket and drew forth a twenty-dollar bill.

"I think the lady is in," he said quietly, handing this legal tender to the man in plush. Even in the residences of millionaires tips of this size are unusual, and the haughty menial at once melted. He pocketed the money.

"No, sir," he said, "she is not in town at all. Speaking confidentially, sir, Miss Berrington's that peculiar she don't like New York. Her ladyship—I beg your pardon, sir—Miss Berrington is at her country 'ome, some distance out of town, sir."

"How far? Where is it?"

"On a lake, sir. I don't quite remember its name."

"Lake Saratoga?" suggested Steele.

"It begins with an S, sir. Oh, yes, sir, Superior—Lake Superior, sir."

"Great Heavens!" cried Steele, unable to repress a smile, "that isn't just exactly in the environs of New York. I suppose you couldn't tell me whether the house is on the Canadian or the United States side?"

"No, sir, I couldn't say, sir, being it's in Michigan, sir."

"Oh, well, that's near enough; I can guess the rest."

The man in plush pronounced the name of the State as if the first syllable were spelt M-i-t-c-h.

"Yes, sir, her ladyship—beg your pardon—Miss Berrington owns a large estate there, so they tell me—thousands and thousands of acres, all covered with forests, and there's a big 'ouse there full of servants; but her lady—but Miss Berrington receives nobody, sir. Not if you brought a letter from the King of Hengland, sir."

"Ha! Rather exclusive, isn't she?"

"Yes, sir."

Thanking the man, Steele turned away and walked down the Avenue to his hotel, resolved to let the Berringtons or the Nicholsons do their worst. He would attempt no further parley with any of the gang, and—probably inspired by the accent of the servitor in plush—gave serious thought to the investing of all his money in British Consols, small as was the percentage granted by that celebrated security. He took it for granted that the Government of Britain was probably free from the influence of the Berrington crowd, and he was rapidly coming to the conclusion that no other sphere of human activity was.

Arriving at his hotel, he found a telegram waiting for him. It proved to be from his oldest and most trusted friend, the vice-president of the Wheat Belt Road, Richard K. Vernon. The telegram ran:—

"Congratulate me. Have just been appointed president of the Wheat Belt System. Important development. Great opening here that just suits you, and so I must see you at once. If you cannot come here, telegraph me, and I shall leave at once for New York."

"Ye gods!" cried Steele, bracing up his shoulders, while the look of anxiety lately customary to his countenance vanished like mist before the sun, "just at the point when I don't know what to do, here comes my chance. I'll bet a farm Vernon is going to offer me the vice-presidency of the road. I'll take it like a shot, and raise the freight rates on soap if Vernon will let me."

He seized a telegraph-form and wrote:—

"Heartiest congratulations. The right man in the right place. You need not come to New York, as I am leaving for home to-night; and to relieve your mind of any anxiety, I shall accept your opening, whatever it is."

Before two days were past, John Steele was closeted with his friend Vernon in the president's room of the huge Wheat Belt building. The great, flat table in the centre was covered over with broad maps taken from the civil engineer's department, maps unknown to the general public.

"Now, Jack," said his friend, "I'm in a position to offer you the absolute surety of doubling, trebling, or even quadrupling your money."

"Thunder!" cried Jack in a tone of disappointment, "I thought you were going to offer me the vice-presidency of the road."

Vernon looked up at him in surprise.

"Would you take it?" he said.

"Take it? Of course, that's what I thought I was engaging to do when I telegraphed from New York."

"Why, no sooner said than done, Jack. I'd no idea you wished to get back into the railway business. I should think a man who can make millions outside wouldn't be content to sit here at a salary of ten or fifteen thousand a year."

"I am tired of making millions," said Jack.

"You don't mean to say," protested Vernon, with something like dismay in his words, "you don't mean to say you won't go in with us? I took your telegram as consent, and because I could thus guarantee the bringing in of a big capitalist, I have induced others to join and secured an extra slice for myself."

"Where there are millions to be made," said Jack dubiously, "there is always a risk, and I had determined not to accept any more chances."

"There is no chance about this, Jack; it is a sure thing, and the development of it rests entirely in my hands. You can double your money and pull out within ten days after I give the word, and I'll give the word whenever you say so."

"What's your project, Vernon?"

"Well, you see, the Wheat Belt Line, which has been one of the most prosperous roads in the country for some years past, is going to build a branch running two hundred and seventy miles north-west until it taps the Wisconsin Pacific. This red line shows you where the road will run. The Wheat Belt Line has secured all the timber-land on each side, but the former president, whose place I have taken, and myself have an option on the prairie and the stump-lands where timber has been cut. The president resigned simply to give his whole time to this land company, and that's why I am in his place. Now, we can get the property at prairie value just now; but the minute we begin surveying, up it will jump. You can trust me to keep my word. If you join us, I shall give the order for surveying the line the moment deeds of the land are in our possession."

"How much money do you expect me to put up, Vernon?"

"You couldn't invest twenty millions, I suppose?"

"Twenty millions! Heaven and earth, no! It would practically clean me out to furnish nine."

"I mentioned the bigger amount simply because I am sure you will double your money within a month, and the more you put in, the more you're going to take out. You see, this is not a speculation, but a certainty."

For a few minutes Jack Steele walked up and down the room, hands deep in his pockets, as was his custom, brow wrinkled and head bent. At last he said, with the old ring of decision in his voice—

"All right, Vernon, I'll go in; but if I fail, you must give me the vice-presidency, as a sort of consolation prize."

"I'll give it to you now," said Vernon. "But it can't fail. I tell you everything is in my hands. It is not as if this were any bluff. The proposed line is a road that is becoming more and more needed every day, and the land is good for the money, even if the road were never built. It's as safe as Government Bonds."

It would be going over ground already sufficiently covered to recount the history of the Western Land Syndicate. Steele had resolved not to invest more than half his fortune; but once a man is involved in an important enterprise, he rarely can predict where he will stop. A scheme grows and grows, and often the financier is compelled to involve himself more and more deeply in order to protect the money already ventured, and finally it becomes all or nothing. Besides this, every speculator is something of the gambler, and once the game has begun, the betting fever has him in its clutch. Before a month was past, Jack Steele had not only paid over every dollar he possessed, but had also become deeply indebted to his bank. In borrowing from the bank he made his irretrievable mistake. As the president had said, the land was intrinsically worth the money paid for it; and if John Steele had merely risked his own assets, he might have been penniless for ten years, but he would ultimately have been sure of getting back what he paid, and probably a good deal more. But to borrow hundreds of thousands at sixty days, in the expectation that he would take

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"The ruin of John Steele was complete."

profits enough to pay the loan before that time expired, was an action he himself, in less feverish moments, would have been the first to condemn. He felt the utmost confidence in his old friend the new president, and it may be said at once that Vernon, throughout the history of what was known as the Great Land Bubble, was perfectly honest and sincere. He was merely a pawn on the board, moved by an unseen force of which he knew nothing.

On the afternoon of the day during which the final payment on the land was made, the president of the Wheat

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Belt Line entered the room of his subordinate with a piece of paper in his hand. His face was white as chalk, and he could not speak. He dropped into a chair before John Steele's desk, and the latter, with a premonition of what was coming, took the paper from his trembling hand. It was a telegram from New York, and ran as follows :—

"The Peter Berringtons Estate has acquired control of the Wheat Belt System. The new Board of Directors of the Wheat Belt System yesterday resolved to abandon the Wisconsin Pacific Branch. If the branch is built at all, which is doubtful, it will begin a hundred and seventy miles west of the point formerly selected. You will, therefore, countermand at once any instructions previously given regarding the Wisconsin Pacific connection. The Board also refuses to ratify the nomination of John Steele as vice-president of the road.—NICHOLSON."

"Cheer up!" said John, with a laugh that sounded just a trifle hollow. "Cheer up, old man. I know all about this, and you're not in the least to blame. You acted in good faith throughout."

"It's horrible, John, horrible! But still, you know, you have the land: that will realise all you've put in before long."

"Yes, Vernon, I've got the land, that's one consolation."

But he knew perfectly well he hadn't. He knew that when the sixty days were up, the bank would foreclose, which was exactly what happened. There were practically no bidders for so large a plot, and Nicholson purchased the property for the exact amount owing to the bank.

The ruin of John Steele was complete.

STAR-TRYSTS.

THE pools of the lilies yearn and sigh
The whole night long for the starry sky;
The sky looks down through the lily-floats,
And pines all day for their ivory throats.

Winds of the morning clarion far
Their taunt at the heels of each laggard star;
There is flit of birds where the boughs hang over;
Arrows of sunlight; breath of clover.

But ah! when the twilight beetle goes
With droning whirr, o'er the sleepy rose,
There comes one perfect house of peace
When the skies and the waters find surcease;

And the lakes grow fond in the day's embrace,
And the stars bend down o'er the pool's wan face;
One perfect hour ere night comes on,
And day from his lily loves is gone—

One perfect hour ere the moon recalls
The loitering stars to her silver halls.

THOMAS WALSH.

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THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

CLEMENTINA: What do they frow slippers after a girl what's gettin' married for, Billy?

BILLY: Oh, that's to show that she'll never be spanked with them again.

GIBER: Have you heard our new organist?

CYNIC: No, what can he do?

GIBER: He plays quite decently.

CYNIC: Oh! a musician, is he?

It was at a London working girls' club that one of the more enthusiastic spirits was describing to her friends how she had formed one of the crowd at the station, and how she had pressed forward and shaken the hero's hand.

"I just grabbed 'is 'and," she said, "an' I says: 'Sir George, Sir George ——' Well, there, I didn't know what I was sayin'; but I tell yer I didn't wan' to wash me 'and afterwards!"

"Ah," said an envious clubmate who had not been there, "I bet 'e did, though!" And the enthusiast collapsed.

TO BE PRECISE.

REGISTRAR (taking necessary information for marriage): Spinster?

BRIDEGROOM-ELECT: Spinster? No, cook!

"Then I suppose I am what you call a socialistic idiot?"

"Why, are you a socialist?"

"Do you know that Fortune knocks once at every man's door?"

"Well, Fortune must have had gloves on when she knocked at mine."

"'Ow did yer git that black eye, Pat?"

"Oi slipped and fell on me back."

"But yer face ain't on yer back?"

"No — nayther was Flannigan!"

"WHY does everybody cry at weddings?"

"Well, I'm only an old, lonely bachelor, living all these years alone, but I guess it's because those who have been married themselves start it, and the others join in."

MAGISTRATE: Describe the man.

WITNESS: Oh, well—a sneaky sort of man.

MAGISTRATE: What do you mean by that?

WITNESS: Well, your honour, he'll never look you straight in the face until your back's turned!

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AT ALL COSTS!

MAID: Now, Miss Muriel, come indoors at once, and be a good girl. Don't you know that if you are naughty, you won't go to heaven?

MURIEL: I don't want to go to heaven—I want to go with daddy!

IN A YOUNG LADY'S ALBUM.

WHEN you said: "Will you write me a rhyme
In this book which I very much treasure?"
I foolishly said at the time:
"What! Write in your album? With pleasure!"
My goodness! You've set me a task,
And my heart jumps with fright like a linnet.
"And what makes it jump?" do you ask?
Why, your album, and everything in it.
For I've turned over page after page,
And from each there peeps out a great teacher.
From Socrates, sturdy old sage,
To Plato, and Henry Ward Beecher.
So my Muse is quite utterly lost
In so very select a society:
In prompting these lines to my cost
She'd a view, there's no doubt, to variety.
"Better give up the task?" You are right.
"Better stop?" Of my Muse I'm a scorner;
For nonsense one should not indite,
With Socrates just round the corner.

Herbert S. Sweetland.

MOWLER: I see some philosopher says that the way to cure yourself of a love affair is to run away. Do you believe it?

CYNICUS: Certainly—if you run away with the girl.

TEACHER: How many trips did Columbus make to the New World?

MARY: Three, mum.

TEACHER: And after which one of these did he die?

A YOUNG man, whom we may call Johnson, because that was not his real name, was married several days ago, and it occurred to him that he would take his bride to a town which he knew well on their honeymoon.

He was particularly desirous of visiting this town, as he told his bride, because at the hotel where he intended staying "they served such delicious honey at every meal."

"This will be delightful," said Mrs. Johnson.

The couple arrived at the hotel in due course, and they were just in time for tea. Johnson escorted his bride proudly to a table in the dining-room, and then, after an admiring glance at her, looked quizzically round the board.

There was no honey on the table, and none in the room. Johnson was surprised, and called a waiter.

"See here," said he, "where's my honey?"

The waiter seemed at a loss as to what to say, but finally leaned forward and in a stage whisper said: "She don't work here no more!"

THE ART OF CONSOLATION.

"THE cart went right over 'is chest and killed 'im on the spot."

"Well, it was a mercy it didn't go over 'is 'ead, anyway."

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AN ANTIDOTE.

TAKE comfort, love-forsaken maid, when rainbow visions tumble,
When cosy castles, built for two, inconsequently crumble.
He likes the other woman best?—well, show a woman's pluck.
Have patience, and another time you'll meet with better luck.

And you, dejected youth, who deem all joy in life is over
Because you play, in matinée, the unsuccessful lover,
Remember this, in any case of future sun or shade,
That many a better lad than you has lost a better maid.

Jessie Pope.

IT is related of a Kilkee porter that, as a train was about leaving that station, a tourist asked him where it was bound for. "Now," says he, "sorr, it's as much as I can do to mind my own business. All I know is she leaves here at half-past eleven, but where in the divvle she goes to I don't know."

THE MODERN DUEL.

SMALL MAN: Yes, sir, he's a contemptible scoundrel, and I told him so!
BIG MAN: Did he knock you down?
SMALL MAN: No; I told him—er—through the telephone.

A WARNING.

IF you let your children fish whilst at the seaside this may prove their favourite amusement on their return home.

THE late Lord Inchiquin was with some friends travelling from Dublin to Ardsollus. The train was very much behind at Limerick Junction, ditto at Limerick, and his lordship was fuming at the prospect of being late at Dromoland for dinner. When he urged the guard to hurry up, and remarked: "We shall be late for dinner," the English friends with him were much amused at the cool and dry remark of the guard: "That entirely depends on what time your lordship dines."

THE DOG MAN: I can't say as 'ow I've got just the sort of dawg as you wants, but if any friend o' yourn 'as got the sort o' thing you wants, I can get 'im for yer in a day or two.

CANNIBAL CHIEF: What was that I had for dinner?
CANNIBAL COOK: He was a bicycle rider, your Excellency.
CANNIBAL CHIEF: I thought I detected a burnt taste.
CANNIBAL COOK: Yes, your Excellency, he was scorching when we caught him.

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"I HEARD about a queer case of absent-mindedness the other day. You know that old Professor, Algebray?"

"Yes; what did he do? Try to pick his teeth with the hypotenuse of a triangle?"

"No. You see, the Professor and Jones occupied the same room at the Tip-a-Day hotel. The Professor wanted to take an early train, and told the clerk to wake him at three o'clock. The clerk did so, and in the hurry the Professor got Jones's clothes on. He didn't notice the difference until he reached the station, and I'll be kicked if he didn't go back to the hotel and go to bed."

"Well, I don't see any absent-mindedness in that."

"You don't! Why, he thought the clerk had waked the wrong man."

A CERTAIN admirer of the nobility staying at Homburg noticed among the arrivals at his hotel the name of a well-known Duke. The opportunity was too good to be lost. Hurrying into the hotel, he sought out the head waiter and gave him a sovereign to place him next the Duke at the *table d'hôte*.

His mortification may be imagined when, on dinner being served, he found, so far from being next to the Duke, that he was placed at one end of the room and the Duke at the other. Angrily he complained to the waiter afterwards, and reminded him of his tip. "True," said the waiter, "you did give me a sovereign, and I did not forget; but when his Grace the Duke gave me two sovereigns that he might not be near you, what was I to do?"

A BALLAD OF STRANGE PARTIES.

The Snilly-Cum-Snuff and the Snaffer-Ree
Went out to a Puppy Dog Tea;
In waistcoats and veils trimmed with Piggy-Wig tails,
They looked just as smart as could be.
Yet their manners at feast (to say but the least),
Were enough to make anyone stare,
For they cut the cake with a garden rake,
And the butter they rubbed in their hair.
The jam and the sprats they stuck in their hats,
Their pockets they filled with the tea,
And the Snilly-Cum-Snuff, when he'd had quite enough,
Poured soup on the Snaffer-Ree.
With treacle and meat they painted their feet;
The toast-rack they used for a comb,
The buns and cold snacks they slid down their backs,
And they carried the tablecloth home!

Hazel Phillips Hanshew.

IN PRAISE OF THRIFT.

SHE (to put him at his ease): Fancy your recognising my face again! Why, you only saw me for a minute, and that must be nearly three years ago!

NERVOUS YOUNG MAN: Oh, it wasn't your face I recognised; it was your dress.

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DIVIDED AFFECTION.

FROM THE PICTURE BY ARTHUR J. ELSLEY.

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"PLUTO'S MESSENGER." BY G. A. STOREY, A.R.A.

THE ART OF MR. G. A. STOREY, A.R.A.

BY ADRIAN MARGAUX.

ABOUT forty years ago, Hever Castle, in Kent, the home of the Boleyns and the scene of the courtship of Ann and Henry VIII., was the summer dwelling-place of a small company of artists with their families—Calderon, Yeames, and Wynfield. During their co-operative tenancy of this historic mansion many artistic friends were entertained there—H. S. Marks, George Leslie, Frank Burnand, and G. A. Storey of the number, the last-named being Calderon's brother-in-law. One day, during her brother's visit, Mrs. Calderon asked him whether he had seen the children at breakfast, declaring that they made "quite a picture."

"So I went to see the children at breakfast," says Mr. Storey, in relating the incident these many years after (in his "Sketches from Memory"), "and there were four little tots all of a row, seated at a high table under a large oriel window, the light streaming in behind them and shining through their fair hair, while the reflection from the white tablecloth lighted up their merry little faces.

"Yes, they did make quite a picture; and I painted it just as I saw it.

"As we were going into dinner one evening, Yeames and I, who were walking side by side, made a halt at the door, and each drew back, saying: 'After you,' which was repeated several times; and we only settled the question by going in arm-in-arm. 'That wouldn't be a bad subject for a picture,' thought I. I thought it over all that evening, and then decided to carry it out."

These two incidents, seemingly trivial at the time, proved to be turning-points in the career of George Adolphus Storey. "Children at Breakfast" and "After You" were painted on Mr. Storey's return to his studio at St. John's Wood, and hung on the line at

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"GRISELDA." BY G. A. STOREY, A.R.A.

the Royal Academy the following year. Their decisive success led Mr. Storey to devote himself to that graceful domestic comedy—"pretty, playful vaudeville," as Tom Taylor once described it—to which he has been more or less faithful ever since.

Until this year of 1867, Mr. Storey had been somewhat fitful in his artistic loves, dallying in turn with classical, historical, and religious subjects, and consequently made very little progress in his profession; in fact, a year or two before this momentous visit to Hever Castle he was so dissatisfied with himself that he seriously contemplated a change of vocation, and had consulted Mr. Dion Boucicault as to the prospects of success on the stage. Mr. Boucicault had told him that the success of an actor largely depended upon his getting, at some time or another, the opportunity of playing just the part which was suited to him. This remark set Mr. Storey thinking whether it did not give the clue to his own want of success as a painter. Perhaps he might yet discover just which part suited him. At Hever Castle this discovery was made, and for the next ten years everything was comparatively "plain sailing" for him, until in 1876, when he was forty-two, the exhibition of his picture, "Scandal," was followed by election as an Associate of the Royal Academy.

Perhaps the circumstances under which Mr. Storey became an artist had something to do with the uncertainty of his aim in his earlier life. The son of parents with no artistic bent, there were several cross-currents in his education. He was first sent to Morden Hall, a private boarding-school in Surrey. Here he won no distinction in the usual studies, but at the annual prize distribution was presented with a silver palette by the drawing-master as a kind of consolation prize in recognition of the boy's courage, and probably skill, in undertaking to make a painting in oils. Nevertheless, it was young Storey's talent for mathematics which at this time most impressed his friends; and accordingly his next school was that of M. Morand, in Paris, M. Morand being a mathematical teacher of some repute. In Paris he remained for a year or two, during which time he saw something of the Revolution of 1848; but his mathematical studies in the result had no definite bearing upon his future career. A love for mathematics, it may be added,

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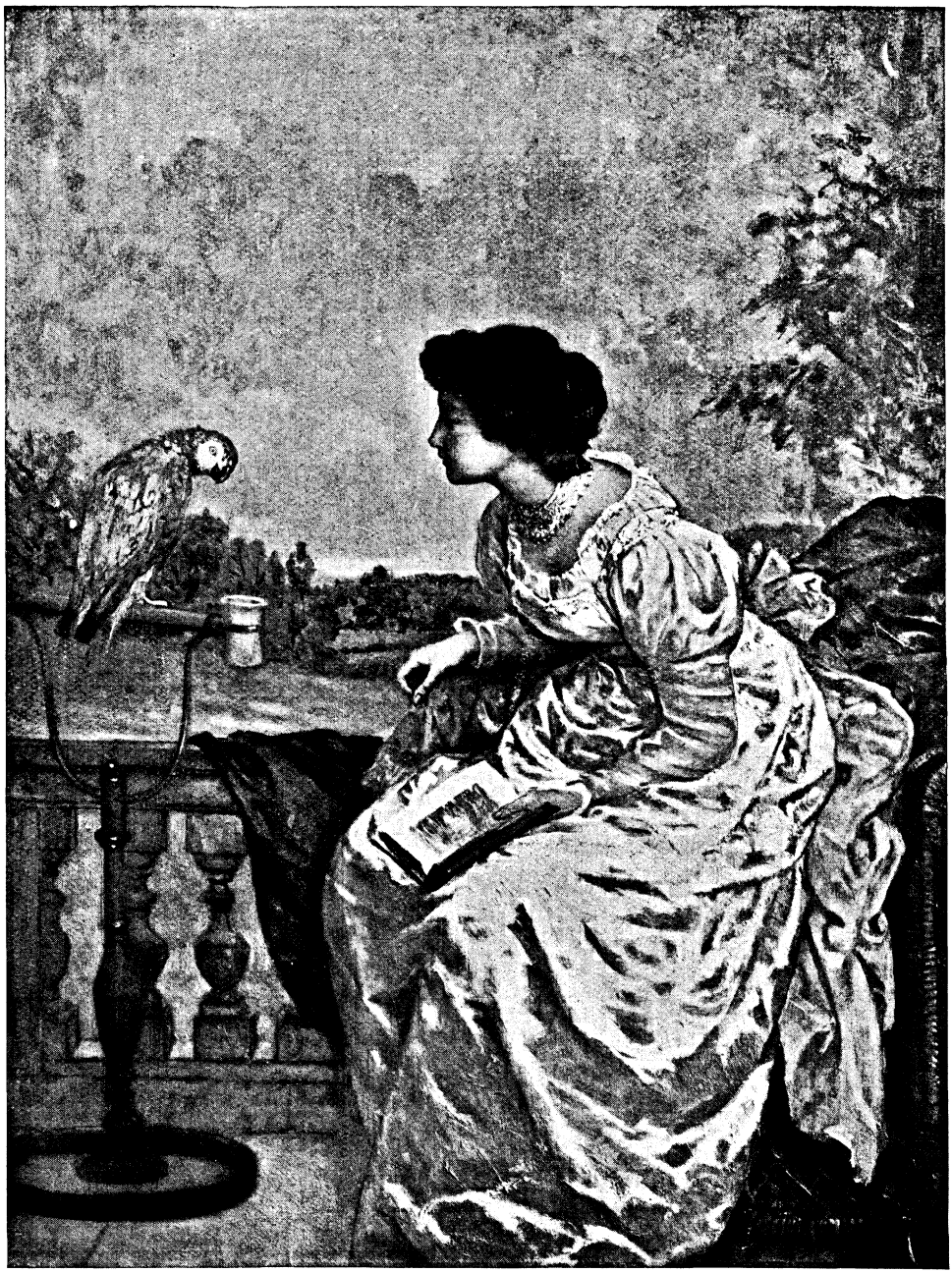

"THE TALKATIVE COMPANION." BY G. A. STOREY, A.R.A.

however, has remained with Mr. Storey throughout his life, and at this moment he is engaged in preparing for the press a treatise on perspective, based upon his experience as lecturer upon perspective at the Royal Academy, which is illustrated by mathematical demonstrations.

The youth returned to England to enter, in compliance with parental desire, the office of a London architect; but in a few weeks he had decided that this was a profession for which he had neither taste nor talent. In Paris he had spent many delightful hours copying masterpieces in the Louvre under

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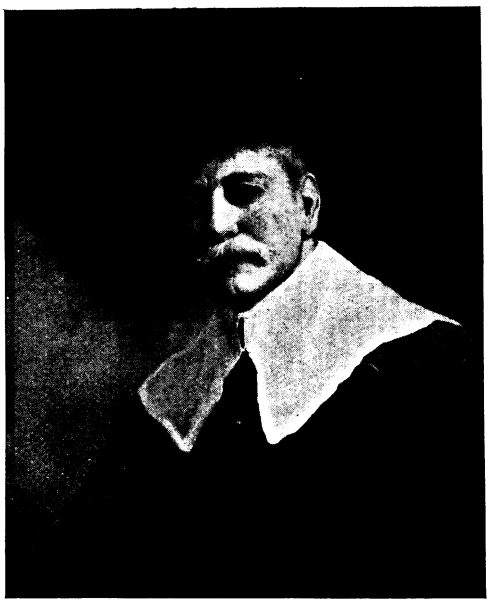
"THE YOUNG PRODIGAL." BY G. A. STOREY, A.R.A.

the guidance of M. Jean Louis Dulong. His thoughts returned lovingly to those enjoyable tasks, and he became a pupil at Leigh's well-known school of art in Newman Street, Oxford Street, with the determination of qualifying for a studentship at the Royal Academy. Among his fellow-students at Leigh's were P. H. Calderon and Henry Stacy Marks, whose fame was afterwards associated with his own as members of the St. John's Wood "clique." At the age of twenty, Mr. Storey passed the examination for the Academy schools, but in the meantime he had secured admission to the Academy, his first picture, "A Family Group," being contributed in 1852, followed the next year by a "Madonna and Child" and a "Holy Family."

Mr. Storey remembers an amusing incident in connection with his first Academy picture. "The Academy," he states, "was then located in Trafalgar Square, and my 'first' picture was hung at the top of the north room. It so happened that I looked in on the very day when the whole family who sat for it went to see it. As there were eight of them, and several friends besides, all looking up at the same time, other visitors, as they came in, looked up too, until quite a little crowd was collected. One individual referred to his catalogue, then to the picture, and exclaimed



"THE MAN IN BLACK." BY G. A. STOREY, A.R.A.
A portrait study of the Artist by himself.

"THE MILLINER'S BILL." BY G. A. STOREY, A.R.A.

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very audibly: 'What an ugly group!' This was unfortunate, as some of the friends had just been saying what good likenesses they were. I did not wait to be congratulated on my success."

In the course of the next few years, Mr. Storey painted over a hundred other portraits, as well as a number of subject pictures, mostly of a somewhat melancholy if poetical character, such as "The Bride's Burial" and "The Widowed Bride," "The Annunciation" and "The Closed House"—this last relating to the Plague in London during the year 1665. In 1862, having an uncle occupying an influential social position in Madrid, he determined upon a sojourn in Spain, with the hope that in a study of Spanish art he might find the inspiration which leadeth to success. About eight months were spent in the Spanish capital, copying Velasquez and Titian, painting grandees and their families, and making sketches of Spanish figures and interiors which, in later years, were to be reproduced in some very successful pictures.

"THE HUNGRY MESSENGER." BY G. A. STOREY, A.R.A.

The influence of Velasquez and other masters of the past has told on this artist's work, perhaps to his own detriment, in a worldly sense, since it caused him to put the art of a picture before all other considerations. Mr. Storey found, as he says, that the companions of his student days were making headway as artists, and that the chief instruments in their professional advancement were historical or semi-historical pictures. To describe his feelings at the time, Mr. Storey, who is a great book-lover, and somewhat given to writing verses, says in one of his early poems:

> My young companions run before me fast,
> Full of success they turn their faces back
> And seem to wonder that I should be last
> To follow in their track.

And so Mr. Storey did "follow in their track" by painting "The Meeting of William Seymour and Arabella Stuart at the Court of James I." and "Henry the Eighth at a Country Merrymaking," as well as one or two other similar themes. Both the works I have named were exhibited at the Academy after the artist had bestowed upon them an infinity of pains, reading up historical works, studying costumes, making innumerable studies; but neither brought the artist public recognition, for they were not to his taste. He did not believe in the *genre historique*. These and other early pictures, as he frankly confesses, were not sold till years afterwards, and then at reduced prices. Then came, in 1866, the visit to Hever Castle, which I have already related, with its important sequel for Mr. Storey's fortunes.

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"REFLECTION." BY G. A. STOREY, A.R.A.
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"Children at Breakfast," and "After You" were followed by a succession of similar pictures, such as "The Shy Pupil," "Saying Grace," "The Duet," and "A Lover's Quarrel," all winning warm appreciation when exhibited. In 1873 came two of Mr. Storey's best-known works, "Scandal" and "Mistress Dorothy." It was "Scandal," indeed, which, in the opinion of the artist, obtained for him, three years later, the honour of election as A.R.A. The death of his mother just before this event somewhat saddened the painter's gratification. The election of Mr. Storey had been a matter of probability for some time previously, and it was the dearest wish of the old lady—who, living in retirement at Ramsgate, nevertheless watched the progress of her son's career with the keenest interest—that she should live long enough to witness it. In 1874, Mr. Storey had lost the election by only a few votes, and this had been a deep disappoint-

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"MISTRESS DOROTHY." BY G. A. STOREY, A.R.A.

ment to his mother. When the hour of triumph did come, she had been dead several weeks.

"Scandal" underwent some curious vicissitudes before it appeared on the walls of the Academy. The picture was, as Mr. Storey considered, approaching completion, when Mr. W. P. Frith, R.A., happened to call and see it. Frith spoke in the highest terms of the subject and composition, but warned his friend that he would never be able to finish it as it ought to be finished in time for the sending-in day. "Keep it till next year—it is far too good to spoil by hurry," was Frith's parting injunction. The R.A. was on the Hanging Committee for the year, and Mr. Storey very wisely decided to follow his advice. The picture was finished, bought by the Agnews, and in the autumn exhibited at their gallery in Liverpool. But it did not make a favourable impression there, and William Agnew bet his brother Tom a new hat that it would not be accepted at the Academy.

On receiving the picture back some time before "sending-in" day at Burlington House, Mr. Storey himself was very displeased with it. He could hardly believe it was the canvas he had sent from his studio—it now seemed so dark and unsatisfactory. At once

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"SUMMER DAYS." BY G. A. STOREY, A.R.A.

he set to work upon it. A large part of the paint was scrubbed away with pumice-stone. After consultation with Mr. Tom Agnew, the artist decided to make several radical alterations in the picture. The most important was the removal of several figures at the back, and putting in their place "a pretty little dark-eyed lady dressed in white, who is rather an invalid, with a handkerchief over her head, and propped up by pillows—to make her the principal figure and evidently the mistress of the house, whose friends have dropped in to ask after her, and to amuse her with the latest bit of 'Scandal.'" The picture, thus courageously repainted, when hung on the line at Burlington House, received the enthusiastic approval of Mr. Storey's fellow-artists, as well as of the general public, and was eventually bought by Mr. Morgan, Mr. Pierpont Morgan's

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"THE CONNOISSEUR." BY G. A. STOREY, A.R.A.

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"THE LOVE-LETTER." BY G. A. STOREY, A.R.A.
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father. It indicates a modesty equal to his courage that the painter should add, in telling the story: "But if I had sent 'Scandal' in as it was when he saw it in Liverpool, the chances are that Sir William Agnew would have won his bet."

In the following year (1873) Mr. Storey made another popular success with "Mistress Dorothy." For some time the picture was on everybody's lips, and it gave the name to a new fashion in ladies' hats. Mr. Storey's account of how the picture came to be painted is very interesting. He had a very beautiful model, the daughter of a naval lieutenant whose death left her unprovided for. After she had sat for him in "Scandal," and other pictures, Miss S. came to him one day and, before posing for the work in hand, announced that she was engaged to be married. She looked so charming as she sat there, the face radiant with her new happiness, that Mr. Storey seized his brushes, placed a new canvas on the easel, and exclaiming: "Stay as you are!" began the picture which was

"PHILOMEL." BY G. A. STOREY, A.R.A.
From the picture in the collection of Arthur P. Johnson, Esq.

to become famous as "Mistress Dorothy." "Whether it was a good or a bad picture," says Mr. Storey, "at all events it was an inspiration."

The "inspiration" caused quite a little sensation at the Academy. Millais declared if he hadn't a wife already, he would have married "that girl." Fred Walker was quite angry with Storey because he refused to introduce him to "Miss S.," on the ground that she was another's already. Sir Francis Grant, then President of the R.A., spoke so enthusiastically of the picture at a big dinner-party at Baron Rothschild's in Piccadilly that the next day the Baron sent his son to see it, and in the course of a few hours had become its purchaser at a good round figure.

About seven years later, a romantic little sequel was revealed to Mr. Storey. Miss S. had been long married, and was apparently very happy in her home, where the artist had once or twice taken tea. One morning he had a letter from a lady asking if it was possible to procure a photograph or engraving of his picture, "Mistress Dorothy." She was very anxious to possess one, because the happy marriage she had made was indirectly due to the picture. Mr. Storey sent a photograph,

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"WAITING FOR HER PARTNER." BY G. A. STOREY, A.R.A.

and, on inquiry, ascertained how it was that he had become responsible for a happy marriage. A Mr. C. went to the Academy and fell violently in love with "Mistress Dorothy." A friend said she knew a young lady just like her, and introduced him; the reality was as pleasing as the picture, and they were betrothed and married. Their little girl had been named "Dorothy" in honour of the picture.

It was "Mistress Dorothy" which gave Mr. Storey his reputation for feminine portraiture, a reputation which he has since sustained with "Reflection," "Philomel," "The Love-Letter," and other works reproduced in these pages, as well as in many avowed portraits. The model for some of these later pictures was the artist's wife, a fact which one has no difficulty in perceiving when Mrs. Storey presides at her tea-table in the garden, albeit in some cases many years have elapsed since she gave the sittings. "Waiting for Her Partner," which is also given here as an example of Mr. Storey's art in painting children, is really a portrait of his daughter Gladys—now a "grown-up" herself—at the age of five. It was the visit of Gladys as a little child to her grand-

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"SCANDAL." BY G. A. STOREY, A.R.A.

Reproduced from the plate published by "The Graphic."

mother's grave at St. Laurence Churchyard, Ramsgate, which suggested to Mr. Storey one of the prettiest verses in his little volume, "Homely Ballads and Old-Fashioned Poems." Gladys could not understand the nature of death, and asked her father some curious questions :—

"Can she hear me if I call her?
Is she lying in the mould?
Is she here? and is she sleeping?
Can God see her? Is she cold?"
The child thus questioned of the dead,
And then she pulled aside the flowers,
Tried to get the earth away;
Her golden tresses fell in showers
'Mid the leaves and blossoms gay.
"Grandmamma," she softly said,
Then she listened—bending low.
Was she heard? I do not know.
There came no answer to her call;
A gentle breath just moved the leaves—
And that was all.

Mr. Storey has not much to tell me concerning the other pictures, mostly painted within the last dozen years or so, with which this article is illustrated. They nearly all explain themselves clearly enough. "The Town Gossip," it is interesting to learn, was painted during 1895 in Mr. Storey's own garden, at the back of his house in Broadhurst Gardens, South Hampstead, although he has contrived to give the scene, which is dominated by the London young lady with her talk of fashion and society, a sufficiently rustic aspect. The backgrounds of a number of his pictures of country life have been painted on Hampstead Heath and in its neighbourhood; sometimes from sketches, however, which were made when even Hampstead was much more rural in character than it is to-day.

"The Young Prodigal," a Dutch-like rendering of a theme which has appealed to many painters, was exhibited in 1887, and "The Hungry Messenger," which now hangs in the Municipal Art Gallery at Sunderland, in 1890; "The Connoisseur" belongs to a period a little earlier. In connection with the sale of "The Hungry Messenger" to the Sunderland Corporation, Mr. Storey tells me that the negotiations were at one time imperilled by the objection on the part of one of the Sunderland administrators that the picture was subversive of morality! Whilst the cavalier is absorbed in the message, the messenger, it will be seen, is abstracting a morsel from the well-filled table—hence the moralist's objection, which, it is satisfactory to know, was overruled without any apparent injury to the virtue of Sunderland.

"The Lost Labour of the Danaides" and "Pluto's Messenger" are comparatively recent examples of Mr. Storey's occasional excursions into classic regions. The Danaides, it may be remembered, were the daughters of King Danaus, of Argos, who, for murdering their husbands in obedience to their father, were employed in the nether world in continually filling with water a vessel which was full of holes. In Mr. Storey's picture their fruitless task is intended to represent the lost labour of Human Life, Time for ever running out. In "Pluto's Messenger," Mr. Storey gave us an imaginative variation of the story of Proserpine. The messenger holds up the autumn-leaf to remind her that the time of her sojourn on earth has expired, and that she must again descend to the lower world—all being typical of summer and winter, or the life and death of Nature. When I last saw Mr. Storey in his studio, he was at work on another picture, in illustration of the old mythology. The subject he had chosen was Jupiter's pursuit, disguised as a swan, of Leda, the daughter of Thestius, whilst she was bathing in the river Eurotas.

At the age of seventy-one, Mr. Storey's industry and vigour would seem to have all the freshness of youth. To this year's Academy he contributed three important pictures, one of which, "Griselda," reproduced here, gives us yet another example of that "bookishness," which is one of this artist's most prominent traits. The incident Mr. Storey depicts is derived from the last story, "Patient Griselda," in Boccaccio's "Decameron." Griselda, a humble country maiden, has gone to the well to fetch water, and is watching the arrival of a grand nobleman—the Marquis of Saluzzo—little suspecting that he has come to ask her to be his bride. It is not a picture which appeals vividly to the popular interest, like "Scandal" or "The Town Gossip," but in its way it is quite characteristic of Mr. Storey's art, which, apart from technical qualities of form and colouring, can show true sympathy and feeling, as well as quiet humour and delicate fancy.

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PRIVATE BELL, SIGNALLER.

By O. CROW.*

BRIGADE—the advance guard of the H. Valley Field Force—was camped near the entrance of the pass. Captain Fisher, with a handful of the Q Lancers, had been detached at daybreak to feel his way up the pass till he came on something strong enough to send him back—and Fisher, being fairly wise in such picnics, had chosen a good point on which to perch a signalling squad to keep up communication with camp.

It was now afternoon.

"Answered," called No. 2 of the signalling squad, his eye still on the glass.

"That's the lot, then. May as well roll up and git," said Corporal Stubbins. "Don't want us up here any more, an' it'll take us half an hour shinning down. Hold on, though; don't take her down. Whip the helio round and let 'em know at camp scouts took it all right."

Private Bell turned the helio and sighted for camp. "Dash it! sun's clouded," reported Private Bell. "Can't make it, corporal. Try the large flags?"

"Flags be dashed! She'll be out again in a minute. You stop and make it. Holden and I'll start on down with the flags and gear. Trust you to do that much." The sneer told on Bell. The corporal and Holden, with flags, water-bottles, and other light camp gear, began their climb down the rocky, precipitous hillside to the valley below, leaving Bell alone with the heliograph to make the final message to camp from Fisher's scouts—when the sun should come out. It was questionable rather if the senior of the squad should have left a junior behind him to do this—especially such a tyro as Bell. He was new, only regimentally trained, and therefore a fair mark for the sneers of the corporal, trained at the "Signalling School."

Bell waited impatiently for the sun, glanced back up the long, almost gorgelike valley whence the scouts of the Q Lancers had just been recalled by the signal they had passed on from the Brigade Camp. The clear pinpoint light of the scout's helio had answered, and as they were doubtless already on their return, no more flashing was to be expected from that direction.

Fisher had shown a good scouting eye for country in his choice of a signaller's perch. Private Bell was left by his party on the rugged top of a high, rocky promontory, that jutted out into the valley where there was a slight bend in its course. He had a clear, extended view to front and rear, and also some way up a long, narrow gorge that opened like a cleft into the hills on the opposite side of the valley. Behind him a narrow, razor-back ledge, with a straight drop on either side, joined his perch to the main range that towered above him in steep spurs and black, frowning cliffs. The main pass and the gorge opposite formed a capital Y, and his post was at the junction of the three strokes.

Private Bell was certainly not brilliant, but he was a "tryer," which should have spared him that parting sneer from the corporal. It rankled.

It seems to be the generally assumed theory that the sun stands still, and that the clouds, ever changeable, chase one another across the sky. A heliographer, however, knows better. He could not tell you how aggravatingly steadfast are the clouds when you want to flash an important message.

A long, narrow strip of cloud in the most exasperating fashion began a slow passage longways over the sun, then the cloud-bank grew wider and wedge-shaped, and the shadows covered all the brown hills and everything far up and down the valley. But for Corporal Stubbins's sneer he would have taken the helio off its tripod, put it in its case, and followed.

"Sure to say it's my dashed fault if I don't get it through!"

The tents, eight miles off, could be clearly seen gleaming in sunlight, and now and again windows in the clouds gave some hope, but the sun would not look through them. "Ten minutes?" More than half an hour, and still "she" was veiled.

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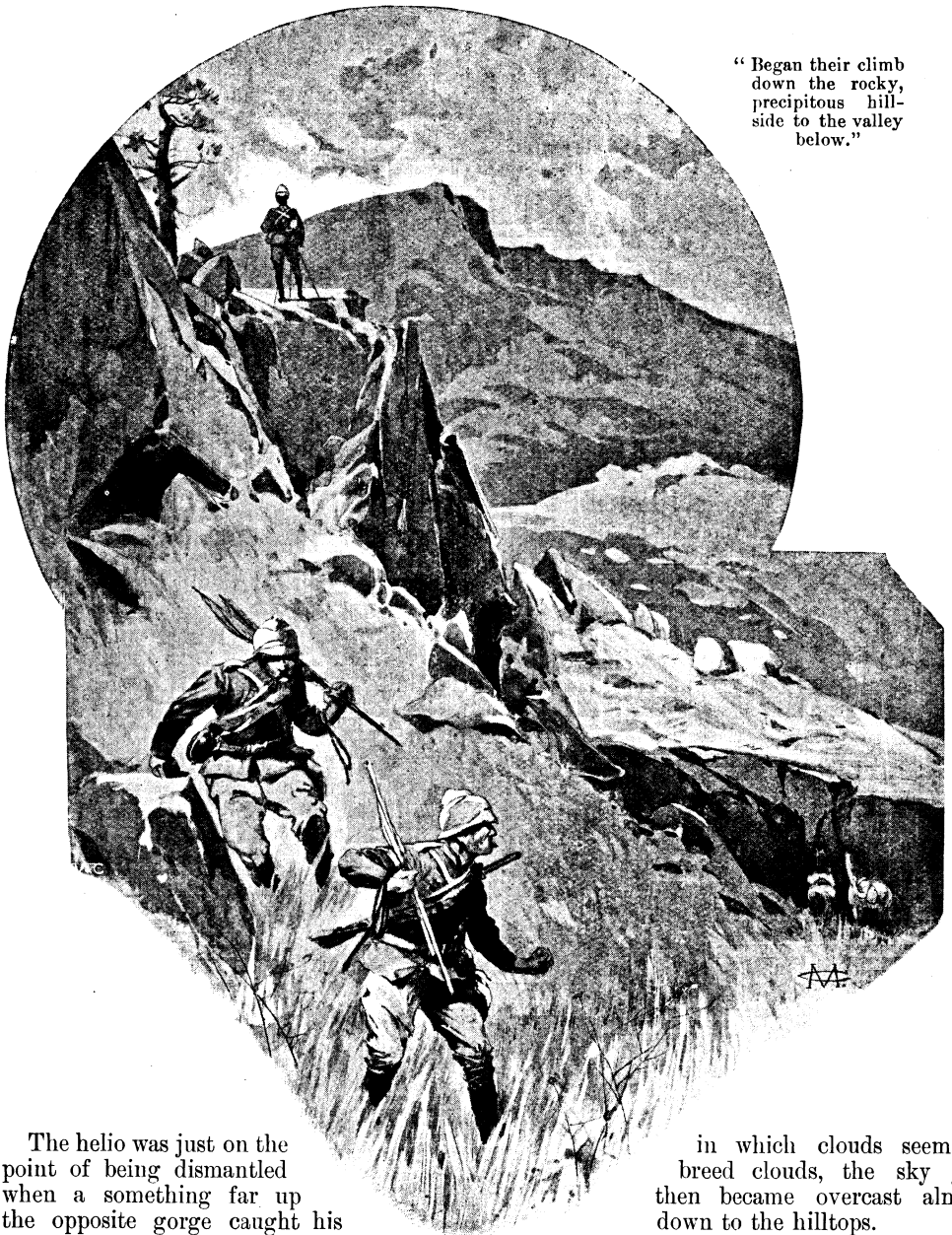

"Began their climb down the rocky, precipitous hill-side to the valley below."

The helio was just on the point of being dismantled when a something far up the opposite gorge caught his eye, and he levelled his glass at it.

"A native — another — three — a dozen! Where the dickens did they all spring from?"

And now, as if by magic, a force of 700 or 800 strong appeared, winding to the junction. At the junction they would certainly cut off Captain Fisher's small scouting party, a weak half-section; and this was undoubtedly their little game. This was indeed a message to send through; but that treacherous sun! In the curious way in which clouds seem to breed clouds, the sky just then became overcast almost down to the hilltops.

One disadvantage of a good signalling situation is that it can be seen as well as see. The sharp-eyed tribesmen had doubtless made him out, and their leaders were only a short mile away. There were many points in the situation in which Bell, full private, found himself, and although, in Corporal Stubbins's opinion, he was dull, they all presented themselves to him in due time.

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First, although it was a very ticklish place

for Private Bell, there was still time for him to get away in safety; secondly, it was a very ugly look-out for the returning scouting party, and they must fall into the trap unless warned, which was impossible, as they were out of sight; thirdly, if he could get a message through to the main camp down the valley, by hard riding help could get up in time to save Fisher and his scouts; fourthly, the sun might not come out again; and lastly, even if it did come out, unless it came out "pretty slippy," Private Bell would be "stalked" on top. Stubbins and Holden had long since reached the bottom, and would already be riding back, probably expecting Bell to join them every minute.

All passed—not too quickly—through Private Bell's methodical brain. Still no sun. Surely some Afghan Joshua had made it stand behind that cloud-bank. A light rustle of leaves and soughing in a wind-crippled pine behind him gave him hope.

"Oh, for a gust!

"'Wait till the clouds roll by, Jenny,'" he hummed, but his heart thumped. "There's a lot dependin' on the duffer of the squad this 'ere afternoon." And then he thought what a score against Stubbins if he got a signal through, and how Stubbins would drop in for it if he didn't get a signal through. He stood behind the pine-trunk to hide—a useless precaution, for he had been seen all day.

If no sun came and he waited much longer, Private Bell would be "expended" without adequate return for the expenditure of one private, and this consideration, although a small one on paper, was beginning to weigh with Private Bell when a great band of light appeared along the opposite hilltops, across the gorge opposite, and moved slowly—"oh, so perishin' slow!"

There were gaps of blue spreading again. There was still time to flash through to camp and save himself. It shone down into the gorge, where only a few of the long stream of brown figures could now be seen; the others had disappeared behind rocks or under the ravine bank, ready for a dash out on Fisher as he crossed at the junction. Patches of light kept flying across the hilltops, the sky was breaking again.

Suddenly he saw eight or ten tribesmen dash out of the gorge, cross the watercourse. and make for his side of the valley at a run, Then Bell wavered; he was a young soldier and alone. In his own words, he "sweated free" for a few seconds. But he made the big resolve: "Bell was done for, but he'd save Fisher's party. It's one private agin a 'arf-section. Which'll fetch across to me first, that blooming sun or those murdering Afghans?"

Few have watched a more exciting race than that which the dull, much abused tyro signaller looked on. Would the band of light creeping across the valley overtake and pass the tribesmen? Already the edge of the cloud-bank was silvering. The band of sunlight was following the dozen figures across in their race in which Bell's head was the prize, for by some evil magic, known only to the English and Shaitan, he would give their prey warning.

"Yes, he must be knocked on the head." Yes, he "sweated free," watching the light band and those black, death messengers making across to him. "Dead heat!" both reached the foot of the steep climb together.

"She'll lick you now, sonnies. She'll travel up hill faster than you can," and as the tribesmen disappeared under the swell of the hill, "she" came out with a steady blaze. He screwed the sun-spot on to the sighting-vane; there was a pardonable shake as he dot, dot, dot, dotted and flashed the preparative. "Will they never answer?" Dot, dot . . . No answer—"and they're racing up to me like monkeys . . . . A ball into you, you blind 'ounds in camp station! For the love of——"

Back came the answering flash. Then he saw the white tents darken, and, "Cursed luck!" *the camp was in shadow.* But they had seen, and "Enemy—scouts cut off. Enemy—scouts cut off. Enemy—scouts cut off. Enemy strong, enemy strong," with slow and desperate deliberation. A glance for a second down the ridge showed several of the leading figures mounting over a swell in the rise; they were more than two-thirds up the ridge. How those wretches can climb!

He offered a good skyline mark, but he did not know he was to be taken without shooting; firing might alarm their prey up the pass. Again the tents whitened and he got the maddening "*Repeat!*"

"Repeat! You blind wretches! wish you were here to repeat!" and this time: "Scouts cut off—enemy strong—send help." Yes, it was taken; and now for Bell. A glance down the ridge—they were close.

The old pine trunk was a lovely rest and shield, and he stopped two of the leaders; the others dashing up, made it rabbit-shooting for Private Bell. His eye was hazy from the

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"The helio flashed in the sun as it swung round."

glare of the helio, but he snapped at them as fast as ever Martini could be loaded. There was a short halt of the half-dozen sweating figures under cover of a rock for a last rush up the last one hundred yards, almost a perpendicular climb, and then they scattered. He had them at splendid advantage, and one was rolled over, and one sank down on his tracks, then rolling down the steep side till stopped by a bush.

A rustle behind him, and he turned in the nick of time. A tribesman dashed at him with a sword. Bell was unloaded; he dodged and missed the cut, smashed at him with the butt, but lost grip of his rifle. The Afghan clutched at it to save himself, and the force of his rush took him past Bell and over the edge with the rifle in his hand.

He snatched up his heliograph. A signaller at bay with a helio is a fairly able person. He was fresh, and they were blown with their climb, and without firearms. Two came over the edge. The helio flashed in the sun as it swung round.

"Dot, dash for you, you dog!" and there was a light crash of breaking glass as he flailed it edgeways into a face and dropped his man. The second man's heart failed him and he dipped down again.

The first rush was foiled. Those below—there could have been but three or four—paused to consider. Bell did not, but sprang down the opposite side, scrambling and sliding to the narrow next between his old

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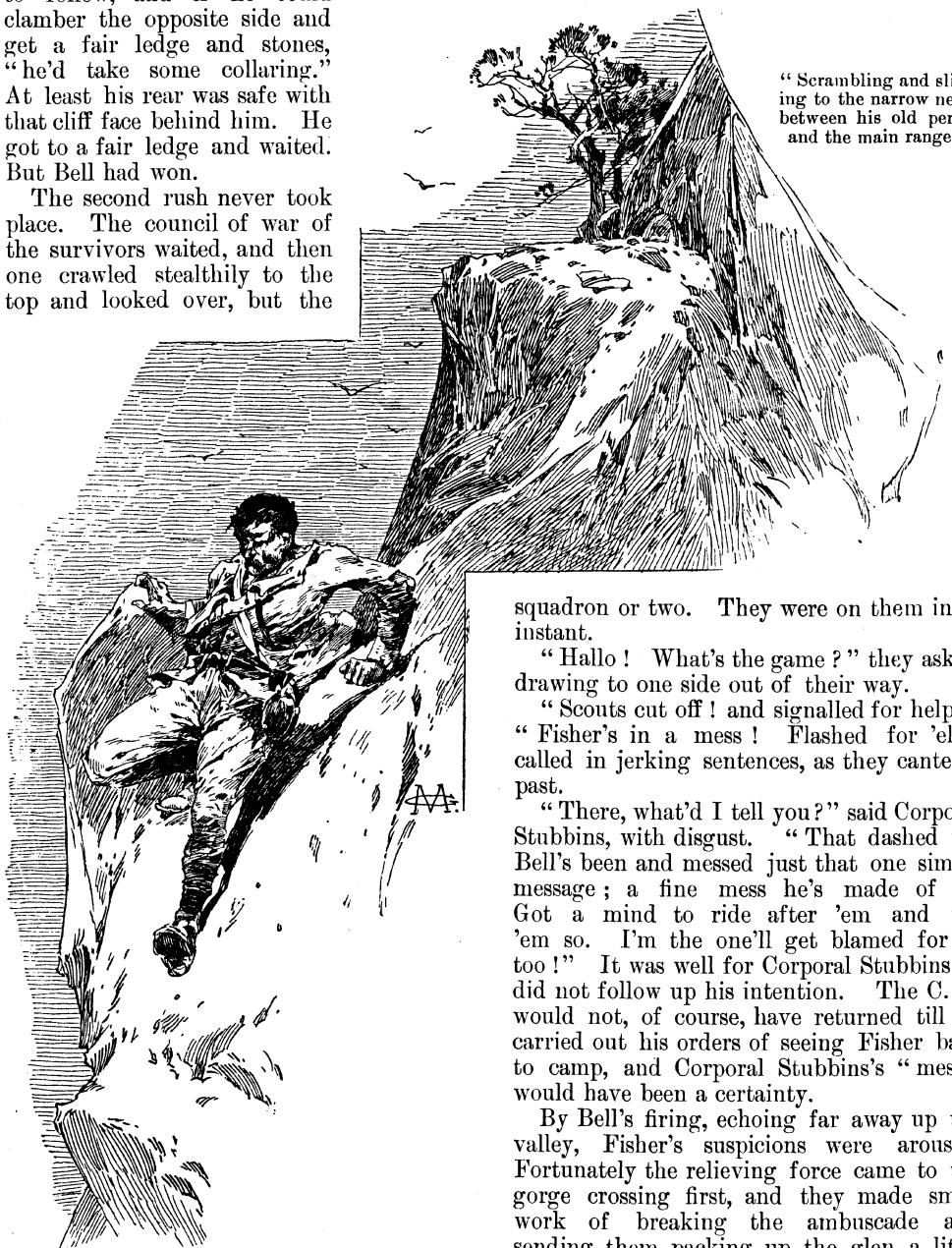
perch and the main range, a narrow saddle-back with precipitous sides.

To where? He never considered, but crossing along it he thought it a bad place to follow, and if he could clamber the opposite side and get a fair ledge and stones, "he'd take some collaring." At least his rear was safe with that cliff face behind him. He got to a fair ledge and waited. But Bell had won.

The second rush never took place. The council of war of the survivors waited, and then one crawled stealthily to the top and looked over, but the "infidel" had disappeared—at any rate, they had displaced him. He could not now give warning to the other infidels, and they left.



"Scrambling and sliding to the narrow next between his old perch and the main range."

Corporal Stubbins and Private Holden were half-way to camp when, at a turn in the track, they saw coming towards them at a race-pace a wing of the Q and a Native squadron or two. They were on them in an instant.

"Hallo! What's the game?" they asked, drawing to one side out of their way.

"Scouts cut off! and signalled for help!" "Fisher's in a mess! Flashed for 'elp," called in jerking sentences, as they cantered past.

"There, what'd I tell you?" said Corporal Stubbins, with disgust. "That dashed pig Bell's been and messed just that one simple message; a fine mess he's made of it! Got a mind to ride after 'em and tell 'em so. I'm the one'll get blamed for it, too!" It was well for Corporal Stubbins he did not follow up his intention. The C. O. would not, of course, have returned till he carried out his orders of seeing Fisher back to camp, and Corporal Stubbins's "mess" would have been a certainty.

By Bell's firing, echoing far away up the valley, Fisher's suspicions were aroused. Fortunately the relieving force came to the gorge crossing first, and they made small work of breaking the ambuscade and sending them packing up the glen, a little matter which was accomplished only a short ten minutes before they were joined by Captain Fisher and his handful of scouts, in hot haste "to be in it."

Parched with thirst, his teeth chattering

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with cold, Bell stood on his rocky platform, still clutching his shattered heliograph, and what his next move should be he found it difficult to decide.

Over a knoll in the valley—after waiting years, it seemed to him—he was rejoiced to see a long dust-cloud, and knew at once he had earned his reward. He made light of everything else, but wondered, as he scrambled back across the saddle, how he could have made so little of such a dizzy business as it really was. He had made nothing of crossing it when he thought the Afghans were behind; it was a very different business returning. He crossed it at last with a shiver, and skirting round to the back of the hill, descended to where his horse had been left.

* * * * *

Private Bell always looked back upon that night in camp as one to be remembered. It was fortunate for his constitution that the nearest beer-canteen was several hundred miles away, for all the scouts and most of the balance of the Q's would certainly have subjected it to a severe test.

It was only human that he felt some pride in showing minute fragments of Afghan on the bent adjusting screws of the maimed heliograph, even though the Signal subaltern did say it was "Confounded waste!" and "Why didn't you prod him in the stomach with the other end? That's the third helio damaged in less than a month."

But Bell's proudest moment was when Captain Fisher strolled out of the mess-tent after dinner and came upon a knot of half-a-dozen of them round a fire, describing the day's adventures.

"That you, Bell?" asked his tall, quiet captain.

"Yessir," springing to attention and saluting.

"Well, you're a dashed good signaller! and I'll take dashed good care to perch you somewhere whenever I'm out on scouting work!"

And he passed on. Private Bell valued this even more than the official reward that came in due course.

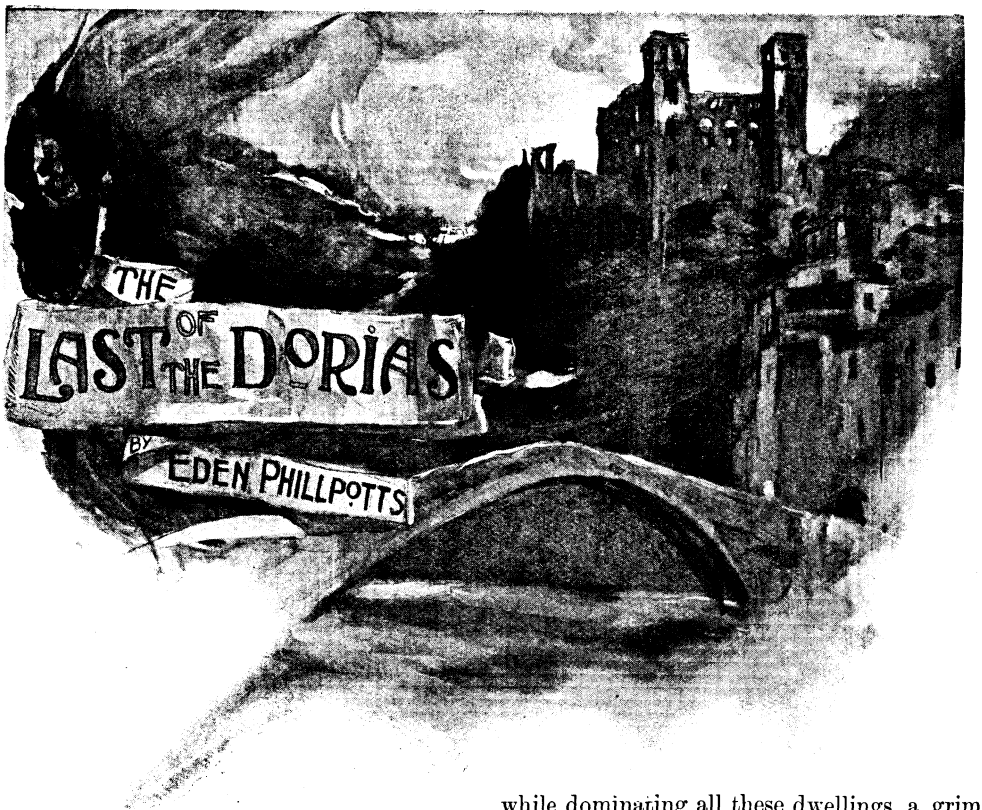
And Corporal Stubbins, who heard, felt that he would like to go away somewhere alone and kick himself.

A WISH AT PARTING.

WHICH shall it be?
Great joy for thine own self, or blessedness
Of healing, helpful life, and power to bless?
Which shall I wish for thee?

Life's very best
Be thine! Whether it come as Joy or Pain,
So it should work thy good, 'twere wholly gain.
God bless thee—for the rest!

L. G. MOBERLY.



THE history of families, like that of nations, is the history of the sand-hill in the hour-glass. They arise, increase, attain to their plenitude of power and prosperity; they diminish and decline by the process of their own development. Finally, Time gives the glass a shake; the family disappears, and the last echo of Fame's trumpet quickly dies away.

In the person of Stefano Doria, a race that once had lorded it over their own domains of Western Italy now threatened to expire. He himself, while not lacking some traditional features of the famous clan, was removed by many generations from the hour of their triumphs and the day when, with the potency of little princes, they reigned over many mountains and valleys from their fortress palace at Dolceacqua, by Nervia river, in the Maritime Alps. Midway inland between Ventimiglia and Bordighera lies the town of the sweet water. An antique bridge with solitary span shadows the crystal beneath; on either side cluster houses under uplifting hills of terraced vine and olive; while dominating all these dwellings, a grim and sombre skeleton of ruined masonry arises, and the home of the Dorias, mighty in decay, still frowns above habitations, churches, and busy mart. The sun scorches its broad plains; the lizards dwell in thousands amongst its shattered stones; pellitory of the wall and other fairer weeds make their home in blind windows and broken towers; this enormous ruin is a part of the scene, and carries a vision of tinted walls, pale, rosy roofs, green shutters, and dark archways upward to its crown and culmination. In the midst of business and bustle, removed by more than a century from the concerns of men, the empty palace stands; while round about it surges a sort of folk who aforetime knelt hatless to its lords. Now the base-born wander in ruined chambers of state; the humble villagers spread their linen to dry upon its broken walls and marble floors; black-eyed babies tumble and play in the closets of counsellors; and bats flutter through casements where princesses have sat and hoped and feared.

Stefano Doria was a cabdriver at Ventimiglia, and by a freak of atavism this man resembled in facial particulars that bygone ancestor, infamous in the family's history, who slew the Prince of Monaco. A signor

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of the neighbourhood had long since acquired the Doria portraits, and he it was who pointed out that Stefano's stern countenance, thin face, and deep-set eyes resembled the murderer from the past. But the cabdriver was a man of mildest manners, and no spark of his family's notorious pride had descended to him. Generations of poverty and intermarriage with the folk had stamped family characteristics out of the ancient race for ever. Stefano's father was a woodman; and his grandfather—one who still enjoyed some autumn sunshine of the ancient prosperity—had been a lemon-grower at Mentone, and saved a few thousand francs for his sons to squander.

Now the last of his line made shift humbly to live at Ventimiglia; and he often drove visitors to Dolceacqua that they might inspect the manifold beauties of that mountain town. Stefano was tired of the jests and threadbare fun that showered upon him; he was weary of the advice that comic Frenchmen and clumsy English — with English sense of humour—placed at his disposal. For the home of the Dorias had now stood in the market for years, and the title of the family went with their fortress, and was to be acquired by anybody who cared for an investment so fantastic. Not a few had seriously debated the prospect; but while a couple of hundred pounds was sufficient to purchase the palace and the dignities that went with it, many thousands had been necessary to render the ruin habitable and restore the least part of its former magnificence.

Stefano often declared in holiday moments that if Providence ever blessed him with a fortune, his pride would drive him to regain the rights and titles of his race; and upon such occasions the Doria's wife usually told her neighbours to laugh at him and remind him that he was childless—the last of his line.

"If Providence sent us francs, we would build a hotel with them, not patch a palace," she declared. "But there will be no francs for us. We shall die as we were born—just above the gutter—and the great lords you sprang from will sigh with gladness in heaven and say: 'Thank the good God, here comes the last of our fallen relations! Now they are all numbered; their tale is told; they disgrace the earth with their rags no more.'"

From which remark it will be observed that Signora Teresa Doria possessed imagination, but lacked sentiment. She disliked poverty very much, though she had known no other state; but life could not slay hope. She and her husband were both fifty years old; and now her salt to existence was gambling, while Doria did the like. He also took pleasure in drink—not for the liquor's self, but for the dreams that came of it. He was no drunkard, yet systematically and in cold blood would enter from time to time upon a bout of wine. Long intervals of sobriety stretched between these excesses, and during them he worked hard at his business and saved his earnings. The couple lived in the Roja Valley and occupied two rooms on the third floor of one of the tall buildings that tower on the northern side of the river at Ventimiglia.

"When you want to drink, you must go from home, my dear," said Teresa; and her husband, seeing the propriety of this arrangement, disappeared about thrice a year for the space of a week. Usually he spent the time at Bordighera, in a slum with a friend; but once Stefano went to San Remo instead, and there he met a man who knew Dolceacqua and took interest in the Dorias.

Giuseppe Ratti was a hotel-keeper, and his property embraced various minor drinking-shops where poor folk congregated. Albeit a hard and calculating spirit, he combined with qualities of greed and selfishness that tincture of romance never quite absent from the heart of the Latin. His wife fostered this tendency, and upon hearing Doria's story, she sent for him and listened to the tale with lively interest. It even changed Signora Ratti's personal aspirations. Her hopes centred in her two boys, and she trusted to see them making a bold figure upon their little stage. One was to be a priest, and the other promised to shine as a painter. She wished, however, that he might be an actor. They had saved a good deal of money—perhaps even enough to restore the Doria palace, though not enough to live in it after they had done so. But now Ratti's wife often talked of Dolceacqua, and her husband, who rather enjoyed the spectacle of himself as a grand and titled signor, discussed the matter and let his lady rebuild the castle to the last tower and pinnacle—in imagination.

Francesca Ratti, although she knew her husband could never reign in the old home of the Dorias, yet found it hard to banish her dreams. One summer she came with her husband to Ventimiglia, entertained Stefano and Teresa Doria at a restaurant, and listened with very great pleasure to such oral shreds

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and scraps of his family's old history as the cabdriver could remember. Then Stefano drove the Rattis and their sons to Dolceacqua, and smarted as usual to hear the hotel-keeper make familiar jests at his expense.

Signora Francesca tramped the ruin, and her dark eyes were full of ambition. At his mother's order her younger son set about sketching the palace; while the hotel-keeper himself walked here and there and, half in earnest, half in jest, calculated the cost of turning the ruin into a habitable abode.

"It would be cheaper to pull it all down and begin again," he said.

"Pull it down, Giuseppe Ratti!" gasped Stefano.

"Yes—the place is no better than a rubbish heap now. Had it only been beside the sea, instead of buried here, we might have made a very fine hotel of it."

A look of deadly anger darkened the Doria's face. He half turned away and spat upon the ground.

"You have no instinct of a grand signor," he said coldly. "You will do well to go back to your *hôtel-pension* and your money-bags."

Signora Francesca eyed the two men—both angry now—and she sighed and turned impatiently away. For the cabdriver, despite his poverty, stood there with the mien and bearing of a gentleman; while Signor Ratti looked what he was. He had a fat, mean face, mean eyes, mean manners, and mean inches, for he stood but little more than five feet.

"Never mind," she thought, "that is nothing at all. We had a prince in our hotel at San Remo who was mistaken for a porter; and poor, beautiful Albrecht, our concierge, has often been thought of royal blood."

But the fact remained that Giuseppe was not rich enough to assume even the scanty remaining dignities of the Doria dynasty and restore the palace also. His wife fretted about it a little and sought for some humbler opening that might furnish distinction and found a new family at less cost; but nothing of the kind just then appeared to be in the Italian market; so again and again she turned in spirit to Dolceacqua, and once or twice visited the palace privately with her artist son, when Signor Ratti was at his Swiss hotel during the summer months.

After three years she already felt a personal interest in the Dorias' old home, and talked as though that famous blood flowed in her own veins. She envied Teresa Doria, and wished that the cabdriver and his wife were higher in the world, so that she might have made friends of them.

But while the Rattis waxed and prospered, the last of the Dorias waned and sank. His wife's amusements absorbed their scanty money, for he never denied her petitions and shared her undying hopes. They starved themselves to take many shares in many lotteries. As high motives not seldom serve with sensible people to control Nature's desires, so the husband and wife lived hard, stinted themselves, and preserved a stern self-denial, that they might find enough money for purchase of new chances. The man ceased awhile from his dissipations and conducted himself with Spartan control. Time after time hope flattered them; one minor prize in a German lottery fell to them; once their number came next to a considerable prize. Then Stefano Doria, calculating the chances with the illogical logic of gamblers, concluded that his wife's turn had really come.

"We must stake without fear; we must buy as though we were rich," he said.

"But our money is spent—it is hard—just now when success must be near. We have nothing left—not a hundred francs," complained Teresa.

He showed her a bag of money with much silver and not a little gold. Whereupon she embraced him, for such a sight had seldom gladdened her eyes.

"Whence? Whence?" she asked.

"I have sold my horse and cab to the Frenchman, Monsieur Lelong. What does it matter whether he owns them or I do? It is a great thing to be free of them. And I shall drive for him, and my profits can scarcely be less than they are."

"The big lottery!"

Stefano nodded.

Soon the last of the Dorias and his wife were living upon air and praying for the days to pass. They had put to the hazard nearly every franc they possessed. On the mornings of the various drawings they went to Mass together, and prayed for luck, and reminded their patron saint that it was their turn. One by one the instalments of the lottery were taken; week by week and month by month the Dorias saw their hopes diminish; then Stefano fell back into his old ways. A fortnight yet remained to the final drawing, but he had already lost his last hope of fortune. As before, he believed that success must attend this last great speculation, so now, though the highest prize of the lottery yet remained to be drawn, hope perished utterly, and he burned to escape, if

"'It may turn into a million francs if you buy it.'"

only for a few days, from the torture of this terrible disappointment, by way of wine.

His wife was powerless to stay him; he gave her twenty francs and departed with the rest of their money to San Remo.

It was not, of course, at the imposing *hôtel-pension* of the Rattis that Stefano stayed. A mean and humble drinking-house received him; but Giuseppe Ratti owned this obscure concern and made good money out of it. News came to him that Stefano Doria, after an absence of more than a year, was returned again, and Signor Ratti hastily prepared to see the cabdriver before Stefano entered upon his besotted debauch and ceased to be company for sane men.

Circumstances, however, and press of business detained Ratti, and it was not until his guest had enjoyed three days at the wine-shop that he met him. Stefano had sunk upon the middle stages of his revel, and, even as the hotel-keeper appeared, words ran high, and the last of the Dorias was crying out that he had been robbed. Others, as drunk as himself, denied it. Then Stefano, recognising the hotel-keeper, turned out his pockets and offered to sell the contents of them to Giuseppe for a few francs. He appeared to be intoxicated, and clearly had no notion of what he was doing.

"I'm afraid there is little here that is worth money, my friend," said the sober man. "A knife—an empty leather purse—an——"

"It isn't empty," answered the other. "It's worth a million francs. Ha, ha! Look!"

He fumbled with the leather, lifted a flap, and dragged out a lottery-ticket.

"Teresa thinks that is hidden at home. But I took it when she was asleep. She is living on black bread and dandelions and prayers—poor fool! But hope was dead. I saw it die in a dream; and I, too, shall die soon and make an end of the Dorias. This ticket will be different when it is mine no more. You, Giuseppe Ratti—you are always lucky. Who knows? It may turn into a million francs if you buy it. Somebody must win the lottery."

Stefano spoke less distinctly than his words are recorded. He was half asleep and half drunk. The hotel-keeper handed him a

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ten-franc piece, and, telling a man behind the bar to see that nobody robbed Doria of the money, departed with the lottery-ticket in his pocket. Soon Signor Ratti had forgotten all about the matter.

II.

THREE days later, Stefano Doria came back to Ventimiglia and the problems of absolute poverty. He found Teresa lying very ill; but a neighbour had been tending her. The husband now took the nurse's place and neglected his work that he might wait upon his wife. His employer therefore turned him off. But Teresa grew a little better at sight of him, and when the doctor told her that there was nothing more to fear and that she would soon recover, the woman found all things brighter in this promise of life, and even inspired her husband with a little of renewed hope. He found fresh work as a driver of carriages, and there came a day when he drove some Americans upon a long excursion into the hills. He had passed beyond Dolceacqua in the valley to Isalobona and Pigna at the foothills of the mountains. Returning mournful, as was his wont when chance brought him face to face with the old home of the Dorias, Stefano stared and started to see a little crowd at his door. In the midst of it Teresa stood. She was quite well again, and now her thin voice rose in hysterical laughter, and men and women laughed in chorus and clustered round her, and gave many evidences of an awakened friendship that had slept very soundly of late.

Stefano heard her speak.

"Ah, neighbours, it is easy to be good friends with the rich! Maria, Nina, Concetta, Beatrice—I see you all—I kiss you all! But you first and last and always, Margherita Pessano, because you came to me when I was sick and alone; and you nursed me like a sister, and did not sleep until my man returned to me. You and your husband shall be first friends to Stefano and to me, and our good shall be your good."

Some men observed Doria, and many voices saluted him and shouted congratulations and applause.

"Welcome, good man, happy man, fortunate man—welcome the last of the Dorias!" cried out Emilio Pessano, the husband of Margherita.

"'Happy,' 'fortunate'? Since when? What is this noise and din? Is everybody mad, that they come here to our hovel and make merry? Are you drunk, Teresa?"

"Yes, with joy, Stefano. The number—the last—the greatest! We have won the first prize in the lottery!"

They cheered and cried the lucky number to each other; then Doria caught the infection, and embraced men and women and shouted with the rest.

"Let us see the ticket now," said Stefano. "Where is it, wife? Our friends shall see it, too; they shall all see it and touch it."

"Where is it?" she said. "You ask that?"

Then she suddenly turned pale and grew still. Her jaw fell, and alarm filled her eyes.

"Surely you know? When your cousin Nina brought the news, I went to the cupboard and looked in the old box at the back. But it was gone. Of course you took it? Don't say——!"

"I forgot," he answered. "I forgot all about it for the moment; but have no fear. It is safe in my pocket. I took it when I went to San Remo to amuse myself. It is safe enough—of course it is safe enough—see——"

He dived into his breast-pocket—then rapidly tried the others one after another.

Teresa grew more frightened and concealed her terror under an outburst of anger.

"Fool!—why must you needs touch it? The ticket was safe there, and now—when you were drunk—oh, God!—search—search—it cannot be—it cannot be that it is gone!"

Suddenly Stefano dropped his hands. A misty ray of memory lighted his brain.

"I sold it to Giuseppe Ratti," he said. "He gave me money to go on drinking. Yes—he has it."

A murmur of dismay arose. A sentimental woman screamed. The men gesticulated and chattered fiercely. Each felt himself a sufferer. Their imagination woke in all a feeling of part-possession in this enormous sum of money.

Teresa, dumb and terrified, turned her head quickly to right and left; lifted her hands and wrung them; listened to the voices and hastened about from man to man for comfort. She was like a dazed dog in a crowd—a terrified dog that has lost itself and can pick up no familiar scent.

"He must be sensible—he must be reasonable—he may not yet have heard," said Stefano Doria. "I go now this moment to him. There is a train within an hour. Be of good cheer, Teresa. It cannot be that Ratti——"

"There is no hope," she answered. "Men are men, not angels. Ratti knows the

"Teresa grew more frightened and concealed her terror under an outburst of anger."

value of money better than we do. All is over."

A dreary, dead finality marked her voice, and every listener felt that Teresa spoke the truth. The people departed; Doria hastened away and reached San Remo an hour after fall of night.

A glorious glitter marked the *hôtel-pension* of the Rattis, and five hundred men were bawling, dancing, and singing outside it. A thin stream of the hotel-keeper's fellow-citizens entered orderly, like persons going into a theatre. They congratulated Giuseppe

and his wife, shook hands with them, drank what they liked to drink, paid nothing, and passed out again shouting and cheering.

Francesca Ratti already tasted the triumphs of position and of power. She stood beside her husband and gave the visitors her hand like a queen. It was a glorious reception.

Stefano took his place in the procession and presently stood before the host and hostess.

"Welcome, Doria, welcome! I expected you! We will talk presently," cried the lucky man. "See how the people flock!"

The new-comer turned to Signora Ratti, and she received him very graciously.

"It is Fate, Stefano Doria. I have felt the finger of Fate moving in this matter these many days. It was to be. We and you—yes—yes—there are mighty mysteries hidden in the conjunction of human lives. You have helped us to be Dorias, too! And we—we shall not forget you."

"My money, my money, Signora! Can it be that your husband will take all? If you knew—if you knew what our years have been—Teresa's and mine—our starving, struggling years! Is your husband a devil, to do this thing?"

"Certainly not, my good Stefano. He is the best and kindest of husbands, and a famous man of business. I knew that it would come about—in dreams I dreamed it; in waking visions I saw it: the palace roofed again—glass in the windows—a flag upon the highest turret. And now it is to be! Ratti no longer, but Doria! Think of it, Stefano Doria, my Giuseppe a lord of the land—and my sons——"

"But what of me and my wife?"

"Do not suppose that we have forgotten you. There is a sacred tie. Something must be done. We shall be relations by law. Something very good shall happen to you. But we have not had time yet to think what it will be."

"You will not give me back my money, Signora Ratti?"

"We have no money of yours, Stefano. You must not talk like that. It is very foolish and wicked."

III.

A FORTNIGHT after this rare fortune, the lucky husband of Signora Francesca paid a visit of state to Dolceacqua. His wife had intended to accompany him, but indisposition prevented her from so doing, and Ratti went alone. It was arranged that Stefano should drive the new lord of the valley from Ventimiglia, and Signor Ratti had promised upon this occasion to explain his intentions concerning the Dorias.

A pair of horses and a comfortable carriage awaited the hotel-keeper, and soon he was driving beside the broad lower reaches of Nervia river and chattering to Stefano.

"Stay," he said. "I cannot talk up to you on the box. Now that we are out of the town, I will mount beside you. Then you can listen to me. But let me get back into the carriage again before we come in sight of Dolceacqua."

Giuseppe was naturally rather full of his own affairs, and for some miles the cab-driver heard little else. The hotel-keeper proposed to take the Doria titles, to rebuild the palace in part, to modify the original form and to leave a certain portion of the picturesque ruin in its desolation. Thus Ratti intended to spend twenty thousand pounds, or half the sum he had won in the lottery.

"It is all very well, but what of Teresa and of me? I should hear of these great things with better heart if I knew what you will do for us. Remember that I have only had ten francs for my lottery-ticket so far, Giuseppe Ratti," said the cabdriver.

"You must call me 'Signor,' my good Stefano. It is well to be clear in such a matter. I am your lord—the head of your family henceforth."

"And what is the head of my family going to do for me and Teresa?"

The new Doria looked at the hills and lifted his eyes to the mountains beyond them.

"It was my wife's good thought," he said. "You know that old abode beneath the rocks near the main entrance of the palace?"

"That hovel?"

"It will be rebuilt. It is important."

"Important to your gatekeeper—yes; not to me."

"We imagined that now you are no longer young—— Just to open the gate for the carriages and visitors——"

"Easy work for Teresa Doria?"

"Exactly. No cares or anxieties. And wages, too—two hundred francs a month, even."

"The last of the Dorias at the palace gate? Shall I wear a livery?"

"Not the last of the Dorias. You must not speak so. Like the phœnix, the family renews its youth and rises from its ashes, as the castle—part of it—will rise from its ruins. And, yes, you will wear the Doria

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"He drove his horses headlong over the narrow parapet into the depths beneath."

livery—when we know what it is exactly. Men are busy working for me. Everything is to be done just as it was—to a button. The Signora is very anxious that all should be in keeping with history."

"There were some great Dorias in history."

"And some great rogues among 'em. I've been reading—reading—reading, till I feel a Doria in every drop of my blood."

"You are a poet, I am sure. Such imagination is marvellous. If you can think yourself a Doria, you can think anything. There was a Doria once who killed a man, Giuseppe Ratti."

"Yes, he killed the Prince of Monaco."

"They say I am exactly like that Doria."

"Nonsense, nonsense! But the porter's gate. You do not thank me, Stefano."

"I must have time. It is such a great-hearted thing you would do, as if one should seethe a kid in his mother's milk. To chain me and my wife to a kennel at your gate—in exchange for a million francs. Is that not too generous?"

"You look at it in the wrong light; you are a pig-headed fool of a man to talk so rudely to your future master."

"Who shall name my future master? But he will not be you, you poor little bag of lard!"

"What is this? How dare you, Doria? Beggar! insolent rascal! Stop and let me get back into the carriage! I will have no more words with you! Stop instantly, or it will be the worse for you!"

"It is true. You will have no more words with me—or anyone. Your last words are spoken, and the book of your deeds is shut. See! we come in sight of the palace! The home of heroes and princes! And you thought to see the last of the Dorias at the gate, that he might bow to your pudding carcass as it waddled in and out! Look down! 'Tis a long way to the river, Giuseppe Ratti."

"Stop and let me alight! Stop, I say, or I will have you arrested and imprisoned!"

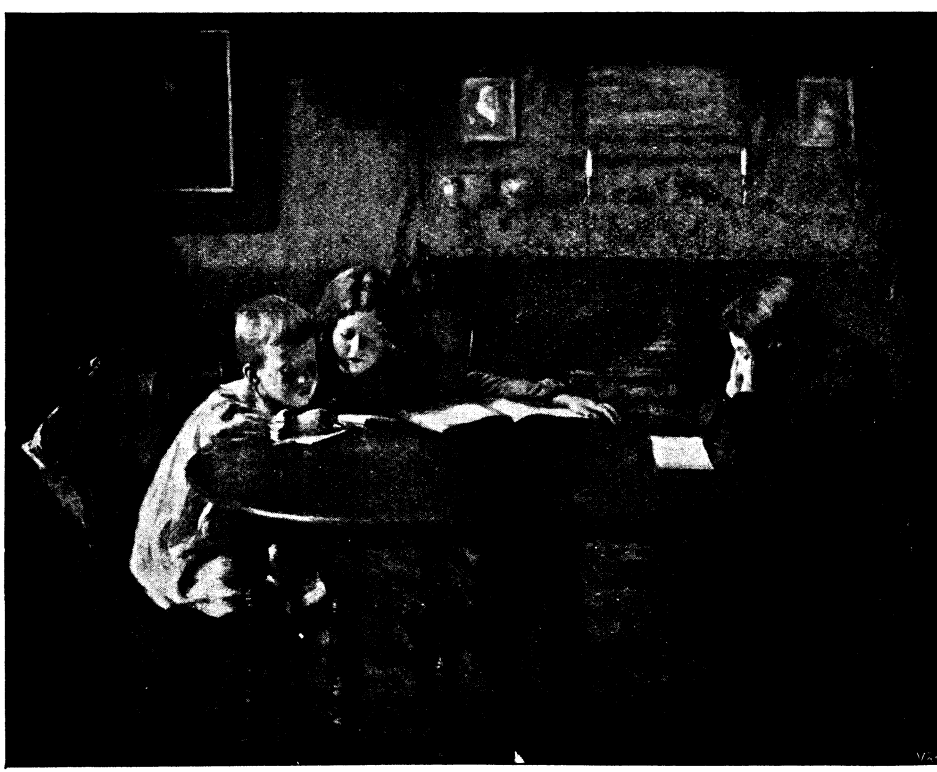
"There—there—the home of the Dorias,

you fat robber and vile keeper of wine-shops! Say 'Farewell!' to those solemn walls; wave 'Adieu!' to the houses; bid the bridge 'Good-bye!' Now the sun sets for you and for me. We will die together down there—far, far down—where the Nervia tumbles."

With one arm Stefano Doria grasped Giuseppe round the neck; with the other he lashed the horses into a gallop. He shouted to them, and soon had them racing madly along the perilous edge of a road that twined high above the river-bed, like a thread upon the hill. Far beneath, an ancient aqueduct wound along on broken arches, and below it Nervia glittered and foamed and roared in the deep heart of the gorge.

For a moment Stefano lifted his eyes to the sunny walls of the palace, where they rose above the house-tops of the distant town; then he drove his horses headlong over the narrow parapet into the depths beneath. The traces broke, and two struggling brutes dropped together, while with them two men also fell.

Long afterwards, a hideous *débris* of torn flesh and broken bones was dragged from the water, and not until dawn of another day did Teresa Doria and Francesca Ratti know that they were widows.



"HOME LESSONS."

From the picture by Eva Roos.

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My Friends, in Feather and Fur.

By LADY INGRAM.

Illustrated from drawings by Collingwood Ingram and from photographs.

My early days were spent under the southern skies of Australia, a land of warmer suns and mellower moons than ours; and the first pet of which I have a vivid recollection is an animal indigenous to that country, a little grey opossum. My brother burnt down a gum-tree in order to catch the mother opossum, who had her home therein. The mother was shot, and it was found that she carried her young one, marsupial fashion, in her pouch. The orphan was at once handed over to my tender mercies, and I did my best to rear it with a spoon on cow's milk; but the little one did not thrive well, and I had the happy inspiration to give it to our cat, which had kittens of a tender age. To my surprise and delight the cat at once took to the 'possum, and treated it as if it were her own offspring. The same cat's daughter kittened in the same box, and I was amused to see that she, too, mothered the little opossum; so, with two foster-mothers, my little pet grew apace, and used to show a lot of temper if he was handled more than he thought desirable. But he always knew me, and would run to me and climb up my dress to my shoulder, where he would sit quite contented. This little habit of his, however, nearly proved fatal to him, as I will presently relate.

"A LITTLE GREY OPOSSUM."

It is the custom of opossum mothers to carry their young, when older, on their heads. One night, hearing my cat cry outside to be admitted to the house, I opened the door, and there was pussy with the little 'possum on her head, its tail curled tightly round her neck, its quaint, odd face showing up well against the cat's black fur; but fearing lest some mishap should befall it from these nocturnal expeditions, I took away the opossum and placed it in a box by itself. It escaped, however, and one night I was roused from my slumbers by screams of "A rat! A rat!" Fortunately, I rushed to the rescue just in time to save my pet. My maiden aunt, with a truly feminine fear of rats, was standing on a chair, her skirts tightly held around her, poker in hand, the light of battle in her eye, determined to slay the intruder. The poor opossum was making frantic endeavours to reach her, so as to climb up her skirts as he did with me; but before my arrival the cat had been sent for to kill the so-called rat. Directly she appeared she solved the difficulty with a little cry of pleasure; she seized the opossum by the back of its neck and walked off with it in her safe custody. After this we left pussy in undisputed possession of her novel nursling. But pets are proverbially unlucky, and our opossum was no exception to this rule. One day he was missing, and we never heard nor saw aught of him again. I fear some strange cat may have killed him when on his nocturnal rambles.

Then there was an Australian magpie or piping crow, a handsome black and white

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bird, intelligent but often very savage. Our bird was at large, and went where he liked or seemed good to his roving fancy. What happy days we all spent, rambling about the paddocks near the house, sitting under the huge gum-trees!

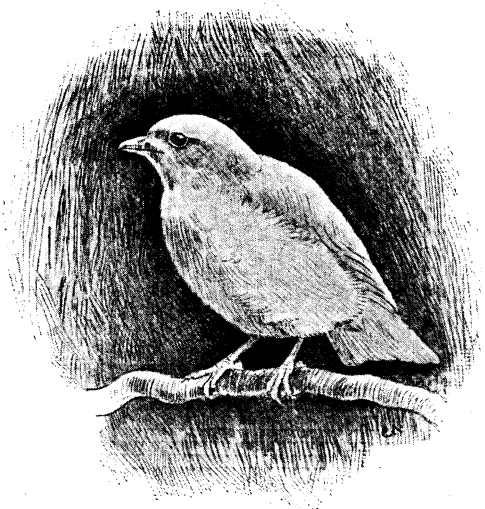
Suddenly there come cries of "Coo-ee! Coo-ee!"

"Surely they are calling us home?" we say.

So, reluctantly leaving our games, we return to the house. On arriving there, we find no one about, only the magpie sitting on the fence singing his melodious song. But is it fancy, or do we discern a comic twinkle in his eye? Has he called us with *malice prepense*, to annoy, or is it merely a desire to have his playmates around him? We cannot guess. I remember one day he, as usual, found his way to the nursery, then on to our sleeping-rooms, and, finding us asleep, proceeded to wake us, gently tweaking our noses with his formidable beak, crooning little songs in our ear. This, to the nurse, appeared as if he meditated pecking our eyes or in some way hurting us with his beak; so, one day, when we were all at

Photo by] [*Goodman & Schmidt, Margate.*

"SHE WOULD PERCH ON THE BACK OF OUR ST. BERNARD."



WHITE BLACKBIRD "BULLSEYE."

prayers, she seized the bird and plunged him into a deep bath, to cure him of a desire to visit the nursery. I can hear him now, coming slowly up the passage towards us, crying, partly in anger, partly in self-commiseration for his sad plight; trailing his woes like Dante's crane, as he walked into the room. It was impossible to finish prayers. The book was closed with a snap, and my father said: "Find out at once what has happened to Maggie."

Our nurse confessed what she had done, and was greatly reprimanded for an excess of zeal on her part to protect her charges. Poor Maggie came to an untoward end, being caught and killed in a rat-trap.

I also had an amusing little dog called Count, a very small white poodle; and even now, looking back among more than a dozen pet dogs, I think Count was the cleverest of them all. What a dislike he had to his weekly tub! Directly he saw the Saturday preparations for it beginning, he would take his departure and trot off to my aunt's house some two miles away, where he would spend Sunday; then, I suppose, a longing for his own *lares* and *penates* would assail him, and Count would return home, only to have his deferred ablutions at once. He also much objected to the burrs common in Australia, and to avoid them would leave the field and trot in solitary state in the roads. If he were really obliged to cross the prickly way, he would feign lameness, lifting a *soi-disant* injured member, crying piteously the while. We would then go to the rescue and carry the little malingerer over the prickly

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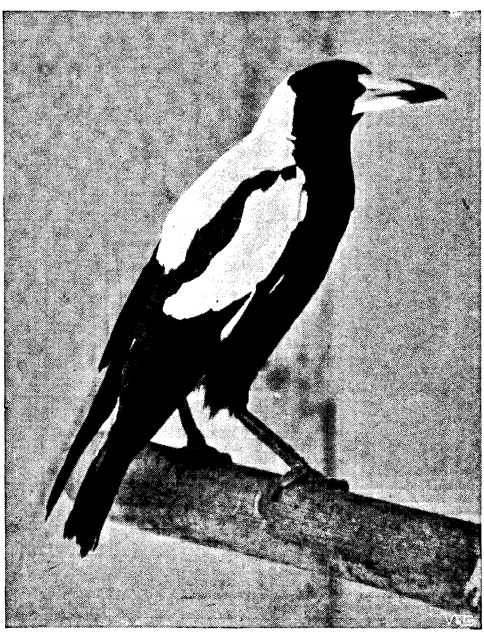
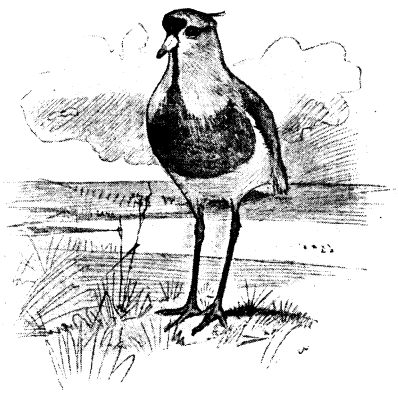
ground ; this done, he would run along as merrily as possible. I could tell many of his funny little ways, but have not the space to do so.

Shetland ponies we had, too, at that time—the first to reach the Colonies, and an immense source of pleasure to us all. My brother made, with his own hands, a rough sort of cart, made of a deal box on wheels, and harness for the cart, the collars in sacking filled with hay, and then drove us triumphantly with a tiny four-in-hand, joyous as any Jehu in the land. We spent



AUSTRALIAN MAGPIE.

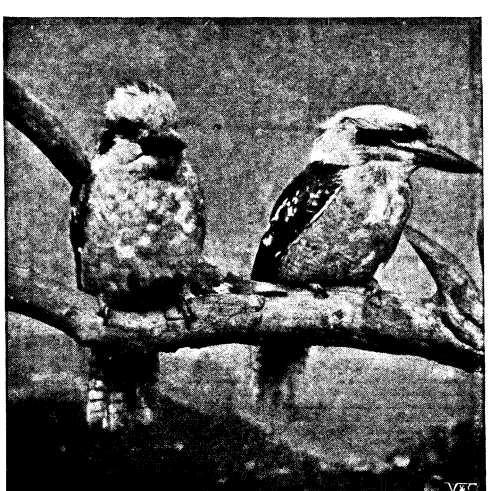
many happy days riding our little ponies ; sometimes we were Arabs wandering over trackless desert wastes, with no food or water, relying on the milk of our Arab steeds for sole sustenance ; anon we were flying over vast prairies in America, the wild Red Indians in full pursuit. Then, another day, we played at circus, balancing ourselves, standing on the saddle and bareback. But these halcyon days were soon to end. My father decided to go to England, that we might all have the advantage of an English education ; so, with much sorrow and many tears, farewells were taken of our ponies, dogs, and birds, as we were not allowed to bring any to England with us. What a change of life we led on our arrival in London ! Soon we were in the midst of music, singing, French, and elocution masters, and



TERU-RERU, OR CAYENNE PLOVER.

in the charge of a clever German governess, whose only idea was to impart the knowledge of which she had more than her full share, so at that time I had few pets. But in due course of time I married, fortunately for me, a husband as fond of birds and animals as myself ; but, until we left town, I had not the opportunity of studying bird-life as I wished. My first wild-bird pet was a young blackbird with white feathers in his tail, picked up by my little son, a delightful bird, so tame that he would sit on the piano, showing the greatest delight at the music. He would fly in the face of a stranger, so fearless was he.

Soon afterwards we bought Albine, our first albino bird, a pure white blackbird, with pink eyes and an orange bill, tame with those she knew, but very timid with strangers. She mated with the black-and-white bird, and made a beautiful nest



AUSTRALIAN LAUGHING JACKASSES.

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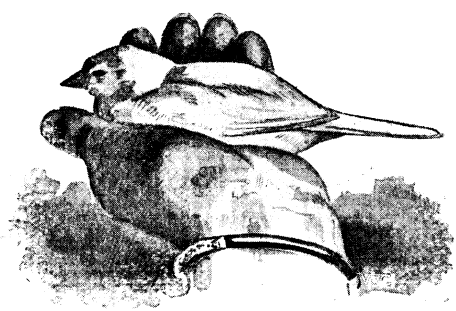
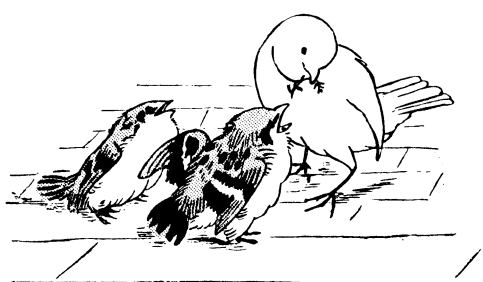
of hay lined with mud in the most ingenious way. But, alas! her eggs were all soft-shelled and, of course, useless; so we placed eggs in her nest from nests in our garden, and she reared many a young thrush and blackbird in our aviary, and very proud she was of her little fledglings. It was very pretty to see her bring them into my drawing-room through the open window from the aviary, encouraging her little timid foster-children. I remember once one fell into the open piano. Hearing its distress, I went to the rescue, but was surprised to find Albine transformed into a virago. She flew fiercely at me, so I hurriedly let the little thrush go. She evidently fancied, from its cries, I was ill-treating it in some way. And yet she was so afraid of children that she would lie *perdu* for hours under the cabinet in the drawing-room whenever one came into the room.



TINY, THE WHITE SPARROW, TAKING A MIDDAY SIESTA.

After her early demise we bought Bil-Bil, who had taken first prize at the Crystal Palace show as an albino cock blackbird. After some time the supposed he-bird built a nest in its wicker cage; it was most amusing to watch first the hay, then the lining with wet mud. The little white bird's state of dirt was terrible, but she worked hard and made a most workmanlike nest, and then laid five eggs. What excitement this created! Were our hopes to be fulfilled at last? Should we proudly rear an albino bird? At last two of the eggs hatched. How we watched the little fluffy morsels. Longing to see signs of white plumage, early and late we watched them. We rose at four each morning to give Bil-Bil insects and mealworms; for although she throve well on her diet of hard-boiled eggs, raw meat, and biscuits, this was not food her precious little ones might eat. The food had to be alive, killed, and carefully rubbed up and down the board of the cage, then with a little sort of chuckling sound it would carefully be placed in the little callow creatures' open bills. After about ten days, Bil-Bil tired of the cares of the family, and, when given mealworms, instead of feeding her birds, made them into a lining for the nest, and began putting more building material on the top of the little birds; so I took them from her, and having observed her manner of feeding them, copied her as carefully as I could, and with great success, for they grew and feathered well. But, alas for our hopes of albino birds!—they assumed the usual sombre plumage of the ordinary blackbirds, one of which we have now, some six years old. We have also Bil-Bil still; this year she made a nest in the conservatory and laid one egg; but the rats have taken possession, and on one occasion caught the poor bird. Fortunately my son saw this and rescued her; but we were obliged, for safety, to put her in a small cage, so I fear now Bil-Bil's career as a matron and mother is over. She is a large, full-sized bird, very white, and with large pink eyes and an orange bill, which makes it impossible at sight to tell the sex of the bird. But Bullseye was the finest



TINY FEEDING YOUNG ONES IN ROOM.

blackbird we ever had, and, perhaps, the finest of our albinos. We showed him, as well as others, at a big show at the Aquarium, and he took first prize, beating a well-known winner in his class. Bullseye was a magnificent cock-bird, and a splendid songster. He died from swallowing a broken needle, which stuck in his throat—a painful death, poor bird! Of white sparrows I have had three—the first, Zimbi, was a large, imposing bird, but not being contented in her cage, one fine day when loose in the drawing-room, went through the open window into the aviary and there elected to remain. In some mysterious manner, proving the old saying that Love laughs at locksmiths, she enticed into the aviary a cock sparrow. We christened him Isidor, as to us he had a Jewish type of face. Great was the commotion in the aviary—such a chattering, such a choosing of

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places for the nest; at last, the lid of a hamper was selected, and a huge edifice erected thereon. Eggs, however, there never were, although she sat continuously in the nest. It was a disappointment, both to us and to Isidor. The next year the same comedy was enacted, and this time ended in a tragedy for poor Zimbi, as she died egg-bound. Wildie, another white sparrow, was Isidor's second wife, and she, too, built a nest in the aviary and hatched two young birds. Not finding suitable food for her young ones, she ventured out into the next aviary, where the white jackdaws were, and in the morning we found her stark and dead, and plucked by these birds as if she were a fowl dressed for the table. Poor Wildie! Her maternal devotion deserved a better fate.

TINY'S NEST.

Of albino birds, we have had seven jackdaws, one rook, three thrushes, one hedge-sparrow, one redpole, one starling, one magpie, five blackbirds—so may, I consider, fairly claim some experience of these birds, which, I think, are more delicate than the ordinary species.

Of all my feathered pets, Darlie (diminutive of "darling") was the most lovable. Dear little Darlie! as I write of her even now I feel a *serrement de cœur*. How well I remember all her pretty ways, her intense devotion to my three sons! I would give much to see her little blue-eyed face among

A SOUVENIR.

us again. When she first came to us from Castangs, she was a small, thin baby-bird, cawing in callow fashion for food, only eating bread-and-milk, and swallowing one's finger as far as possible when one fed her, If she had not had the greatest care, I doubt if we should have reared her; but what attention and experience in feeding birds could do was done, and presently Darlie was in fine feather and good health. She had the quaintest ways: when the gong sounded for meals, its purport was as well known to her as to us, and she would call for admittance to the house, flying in from the garden to the dining-room to luncheon, and would walk round the table, helping herself to her favourite morsels from each of our plates. And if no water was put for her, she would knock over our glasses until her own wineglassful of liquid was brought her. An imperious little lady was Darlie. When the uncertain glory of April came, then Darlie proclaimed himself of the gentler sex by building a nest in a cupboard in our hall in my husband's hat. Quaint it was to see her little white face peering over the edge of the hat; perturbed and angry if any stranger should approach too near to the sacred spot. The building of the nest was a fearful and wonderful work. What a quantity of material was taken! each room carefully

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scanned for contributions: fur from my sable cape, fur from my bedroom slippers, my silver pen, sticks, straws, pink blotting-

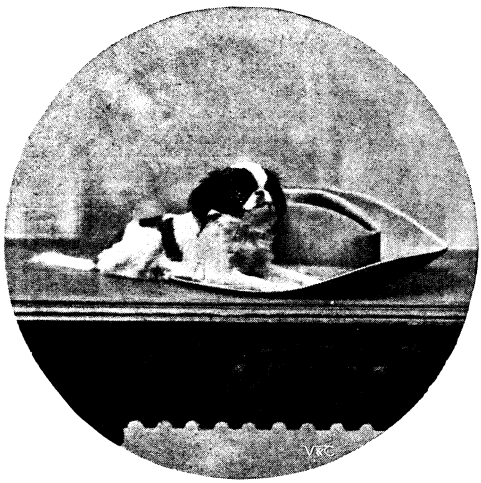
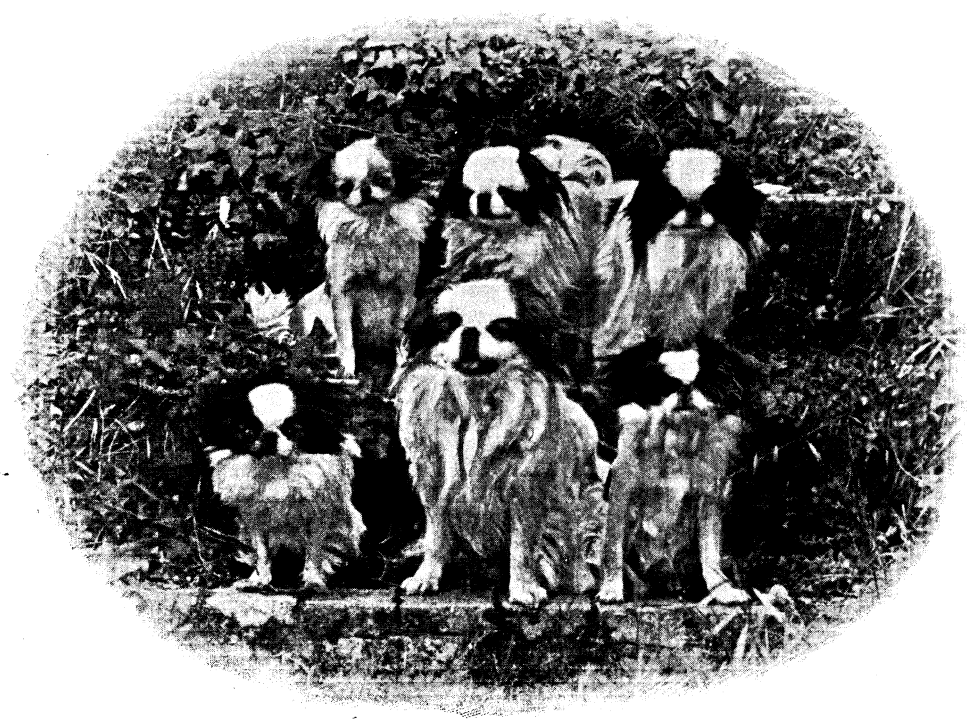


Photo by] [*Houghton, Margate.*

A JAP WEIGHING ONLY TWO POUNDS.

paper, and even forks; it was marvellous she could carry such heavy things. And then the sitting commenced; but, of course, it was all labour lost, as the eggs were sterile. We gave her two newly hatched jackdaws, procured with much climbing by my son. However, she was doubtful, I think, of their really being her own offspring; and, after tantalising them with offers of mealworms, would eventually swallow the food herself. Needless to say, the little birds did not long survive. Next year Darlie built in the pantry cupboard, clearing all the wine-glasses out in the most summary fashion on to the floor. What she cost us that year I do not like to calculate; but we forgave her all for the sake of her pretty ways. She went for three years following to Yorkshire, where we had a shooting, and would accompany us on our walks on the moor, flying long distances high up in the air, always returning with her cry: "Coming? Oh, yes!" She would wait while we lifted up stones, and ate all sorts of little insects she would find under them. Our dogs she was not the least afraid of, and would perch on the back of our St. Bernard, and peck our other pets' tails if she happened to be in a mischievous mood. I could write much more about Darlie, but fear to weary my readers. Jenner Weir, who saw her, wrote these words about her in *Nature Notes:* "Upon the whole, I deem this white jackdaw to be



EXPECTING THEIR WALK.

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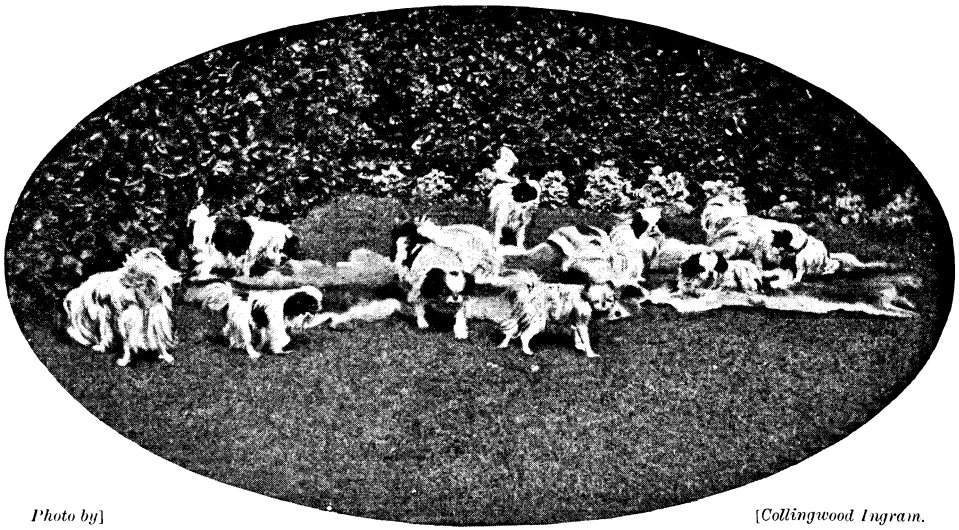

Photo by] [*Collingwood Ingram.*

A JAPANESE BATTALION.

the most charming bird it has ever been my fate to meet with." This, from a septuagenarian naturalist, is no small praise, and I feel in my heart that we ne'er shall look upon her like again. Birds vary as much as human beings do, and the other jackdaws were never such delightful companions as Darlie was. Unfortunately, we were away from home a great deal, and Darlie missed both her companions and her change of diet, and did not long survive. There was sincere grief at our little bird friend's demise.

We have had a little corner in our cabinet dedicated to Darlie's memory. In it there are various photographs of her, a little miniature beautifully done by a friend, her five eggs in cotton wool, and a brooch containing some of her feathers.

We had another pair of white jackdaws. These had made a nest in the aviary and laid eggs, but a crow, another occupant of the same aviary, ate the eggs. Wolf, the fickle male bird, had fallen desperately in love with a Peruvian magpie, and would not look at his lawful spouse, so the owner had sold them to us, hoping change of scene might promote a better domestic feeling. While with us, Wolf never showed the least interest in poor Jeannie, a dull, dispirited, heart-broken sort of bird, and she did not live

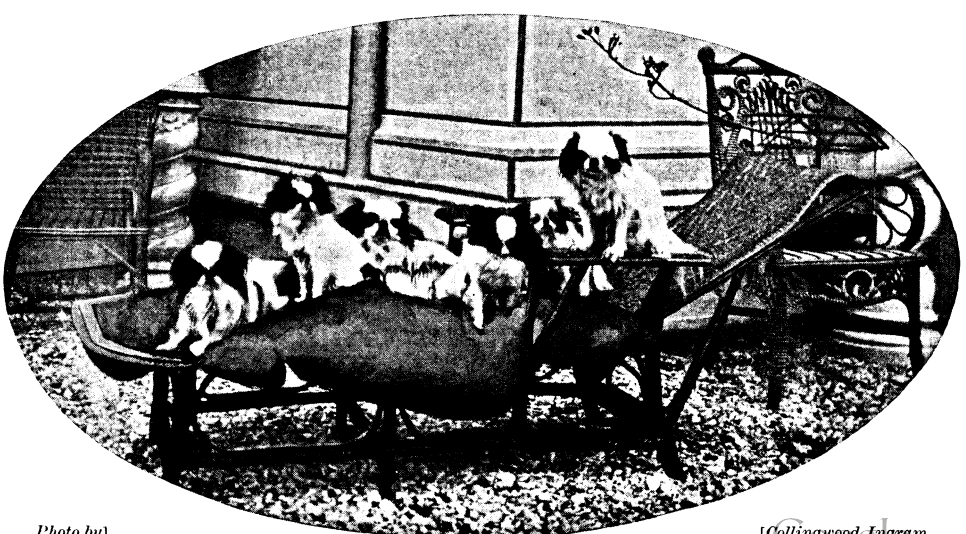

Photo by] [*Collingwood Ingram.*

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HALF-A-DOZEN.

long. Wolf paid great attention to Darlie, but she did not return his affection. Birds are very capricious in their loves. Wolf died last year from eating rat-poison. He was exceedingly tame; whenever he saw us, he would call: "Come along!" distinctly, with outstretched wings. We always felt, at any rate, he gave us a warm welcome into our little garden. Our white jackdaws were free in the daytime and took long flights wherever they pleased. How they escaped the guns of the 'Arrys that frequent this part of the world is a marvel; but after seven years' immunity, our Barney, who came to us with Darlie, was at last shot—no credit to the marksman, as he was so tame one could almost get within touching distance of him. But Fate is unkind to pets, for once they lose their distrust of mankind, some cruel mischance befalls them.

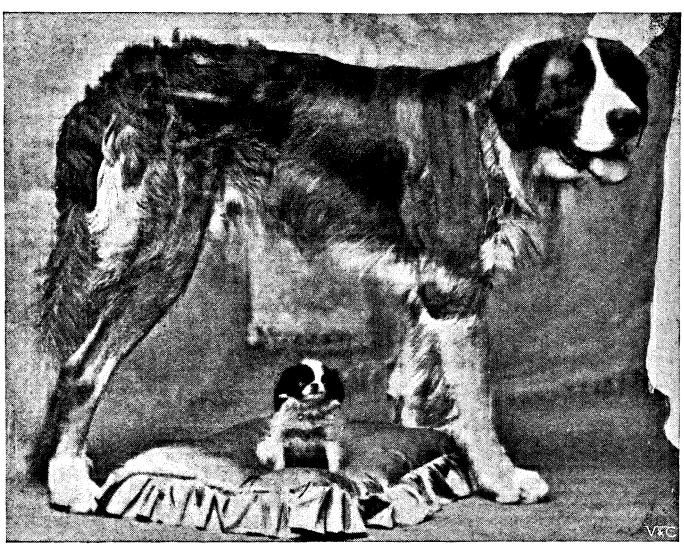

Photo by] [*Houghton, Margate.*

DIGNITY AND IMPUDENCE DOWN TO DATE.

My white sparrow is a delightful little bird; she builds enormous nests in my drawing-room, which, every year, is given up entirely to her. She has a mate, one Tony, a common little fellow of quite a different clay from my refined and sweet little Tiny; he is so selfish, so eager to have the best of everything, never helping her to make her nests. I am the one selected for this office, and it is my boast that there is no hen-sparrow in the land that has a better knowledge of building a nest than myself. But perhaps Tiny has a more luxurious taste than an outside bird can indulge in—for instance, she likes pale blue ribbons, black chiffons, coloured silks, then a few feathers; my own hair she especially likes, and many a rape of my locks was effected as I cut off pieces for her, also some of the hair of our Airedale terrier. Manifold, indeed, are the materials that go to the making of the big, untidy nest, built between the silk curtains of my drawing-room in town. For several years she and I have built the nest together. She seems quite unhappy if I will not remain with her, and she manifests the strongest confidence in my choice of materials. I have not had the best of health, and have spent many days in my drawing-room with Tiny, busy building. I laughingly say I understand every word she says; and surely there is a subtle sympathy between us. She tells me if she wants water—for instance, a bath—or any dainty she most affects—a little milk from a spoon. Tiny's dietary is very varied, and to this I attribute her good health and plumage. She is now nearly thirteen years old, and at this time looks the pink of perfection, in spite of all the families she has reared. Tony is a very up-to-date parent, troubling himself in no wise about nest-making or family-feeding; in fact, he treats her rather badly. I wish she had a kinder mate, but it is impossible to find birds tame enough to live in a room unless brought up by hand, as he was; so she must make the best of a bad bargain and stick to her Tony. They travel abroad with us, and once on the Nile we let them loose on the *dahabeah*. Some Egyptian sparrows came on the deck, and, doubtless, in some way insulted the English flag, for Tony, infuriated, began a fight, and disappeared over the side of the *dahabeah* and was lost to view. For five hours did we all walk up and down the banks of the river, making the place resound with cries of "Tony! Tony!" No answer came, and it was a very sad party that went down to dress for dinner; for, in spite of Tony's failings as a spouse, he is a sharp, amusing little *gamin* of a bird. Presently a shout from my eldest son brought me on deck. Hurrah!

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Tony had returned. Very tired, very thirsty was the truant. Where he had been all these hours, we never could tell. I only hope that in this mimic bird warfare Tony established the supremacy of England and well punished the Dervish sparrow that had so insulted him. Instead of a fatted calf, the crew were given a sheep to celebrate the truant's return, and the *dahabeah* resounded with cries of "Salaam Tony!" from the Arab crew, who were thoroughly interested in the little episode. Tiny has been to the Riviera and on a yachting trip to Corsica, where, on our return journey, we had one of the roughest passages it has been my fate to be in. How the little bird kept on a perch, I can only conjecture. It was so terribly rough I could not put my foot out of my berth, and yet, on arrival, she seemed the least battered of us all. She comes to breakfast every morning, and, if I *can* admit a fault in an almost faultless bird, she is a little too fond of the pleasures of the table. When she has her young broods, however, she is quite indefatigable in feeding them, and at the end of the time is merely skin and bone, as she hardly eats enough to keep herself alive. Most birds have a dislike to be handled, but Tiny has no fear in this respect—comes to me when tired, and nestles in my upturned hand, pecking my thumb if I move it, then falls asleep. After her nap she flies away; but often returns to nestle in the frills of my nightgown, or goes

THE PIPE OF PEACE.

THE TEETOTALLER.

to sleep down one's sleeve. I often wonder no mischance has befallen her, for she has no fear of us, and, if frightened, flies at once to me.

The sparrow is a much maligned bird, and yet, as pets, they are wonderfully intelligent, and, if suspicious of danger, are very trusting to those they like. Tiny has reared numerous families—quite twelve—and *never* feeds her young ones on any food unless it is alive, such as mealworms, flies, spiders. It is only when they can fly she gives them cooked peas or a little raw meat. Their young ones are so wild, they are impossible to keep, as they beat themselves nearly to death with fright when anyone comes in the room. They generally escape; and as they are ordinary brown sparrows, we do not mourn their loss. I had another little sparrow as tame as Tiny, and more courageous, reared by me from a little mite. The nest was blown down from a tree; so I thought, if possible, I would save its life. It was a little hen-sparrow, and so tame it would follow us from room to room; go out in the garden with us; fly away and join its companion sparrow, and be quite lost for half an hour, when it would return and perch on my shoulder. I must not forget some tomtits reared from the nest, only a few days old when we had them. They are very difficult to rear, requiring insect food, and it must be varied. One does one's best, but it is impossible to know what insects are suitable.

The small tomtits are remarkably fearless, pecking fiercely at the fruit they are given, making excursions up one's sleeve—regular little Paul Prys, hanging head downwards,

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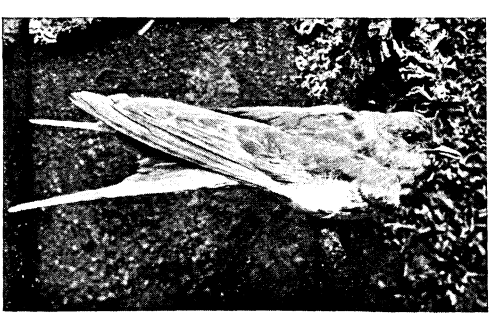
roosting in most extraordinary places, and very vivacious. We also have reared white-throats, stonechats, shrikes, from the nest; so I think we have had experience in bird rearing and keeping. Tanagers we have had, golden finches, yellow-hammers (one of these we have had ten years), parrots, glossy starlings, many small finches of sorts, crossbills, etc.; but albino birds are my special hobby.

I must not forget my white swallow. It was brought to me shot by a barbarous gamekeeper, and was bleeding profusely from a broken wing; indeed, the end joint had to be cut off with a pair of sharp scissors. I was extremely sorry to see the little bird so injured, and refused at first to have anything to do with it, for swallows are difficult to keep in captivity. But my sympathy was aroused for the little frightened invalid; and as the gamekeeper said he didn't know what to do with it, I consented to try and rear it. I succeeded in getting it to eat by offering it tiny flies stuck on the back of my hand, and in time it got to know me well and showed great pleasure when it heard my voice, although it was ever nervous of strangers; so much so that if frightened, it would bang against the glass wall of its cage and cause the injured wing to bleed freely. It was brought to me in October, just when its kind begin to migrate to a warmer climate. The only chance of saving it alive was to keep it in an equable temperature; this we did by having a glass-house made, with a tray under the cage containing a hot-water bottle, which we filled at ten p.m. and at seven a.m. in winter, thus keeping the bird in one even temperature of sixty degrees. We kept a thermometer in the cage always. Gentles we got from France. These hatched into flies in the kitchen, kept in a sort of muslin cage, and mealworms also were a favourite diet with him. We kept him over the moult and the winter, and thought we might, with care, keep him for years; but I was in bed with a cold, and my husband, thinking the bright sunshine might do him good, put him out in an east wind in the spring. And here, at Westgate, the wind is not tempered with mercy at that time of year. My little swallow caught cold and became weak. I went to town, and thinking the journey in his weak state would do him harm, left him at home. A few days afterwards I heard of his death. I really think he knew me, for the moment he heard my voice he would commence his little swallow-song and would peck my face in a sort of affected anger; whilst if a stranger came to look at him—and many were interested, naturally, in a white swallow in a glass cage—he would bang against the glass and manifest great terror. But it has always been to me sad to see a bird so essentially a bird of passage, sitting all day long on his perch, unable to fly. One so regrets one's feathered favourites that I am resolved to rear no more, and am now much interested in Japanese spaniels.

I must end these notes in the hope that my readers will not have tired of what at any rate is a plain and veracious account of some of my bird and animal friends.



THE WHITE SWALLOW.

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LADY ANNE'S TRUSTEE.

By FLORENCE WARDEN.*

T was in one of the pretty but rather stuffy little old-fashioned houses in a back street in what used to be Brompton, but which now puts "Sloane Street" on its note-paper, that I first saw Lady Anne Smeeth.

I had been sent to her from a registry-office, to which she had applied for a companion and secretary; and when I was shown into the double drawing-room, which had once been divided into two rooms by folding-doors, I was surprised to find a slender, pretty-looking woman, dressed in cream-coloured cashmere, with a bunch of daffodils pinned into her loose morning jacket, lying on a sofa and holding out, with a smile, a long, slim hand adorned with some splendid rings.

"Lady Anne Smeeth?" I said almost under my breath, quite expecting to be answered in the negative.

For I had been led to expect to see a middle-aged woman, and I had been told that Lady Anne was "eccentric," so that I had been prepared for something quite different from the fair-haired, blue-eyed lady who looked about eight-and-twenty, and who presented none of the characteristics associated in my mind with "eccentricity."

"Yes," she answered, much to my amazement. "Don't look so much shocked. And so you, I suppose, are Miss Jeannette Purley? Sit down. I like the look of you. You don't mind my outspokenness, I hope?"

"Oh, no," said I. "And I was not shocked. I was surprised."

"How was that?" said she, smiling archly, so that I reddened a little, guessing that she was shrewd enough to know what I meant. As I hesitated, she went on: "You had expected to see an old woman—was that it?"

"Not old," I said quickly, "but not so young as you are."

"Not so young as I *look*," corrected Lady Anne graciously. "I'm forty-two."

My flattering astonishment was so genuine that Lady Anne laughed outright.

"I make no merit," she said, "of my frankness with regard to my age. Unhappily for us who happen to have what the penny novels call 'blue blood' in our veins, our ages are recorded against us in Debrett; and poor Anne, second daughter of the Earl of Sarre, has her birth put down under the year 1863. And now let me guess your age: two-and-twenty?"

"I'm twenty-three," said I.

"And partly French, I think, by your Christian name, and something in the type?"

"One of my grandmothers was French," said I, "and I was christened after her—I think because I was supposed to look like a French baby."

"And that's what you look like now," replied Lady Anne, with more amusement than ever; "with your little round brunette face and bright brown eyes, you look a great deal more like a *petite Parisienne* than a stolid, solemn English girl."

I laughed, but not very heartily, as I began to fear that my want of stolidity might interfere with my chances of getting the engagement. And the lady herself, so attractive and original; the room, with its harmonies of pale blue and cream colour, its background of delicate ferns, stately palms, and gorgeous blossoms in the conservatory beyond—all had excited in me a strong desire that I might "suit."

"I'm not frivolous, really," I began in rather a faltering voice.

But Lady Anne interrupted me with a wave of the hand.

"I don't care whether you're frivolous or not," she said. "If you come to stay with me, you can please yourself about that. Can you speak and write French well, quite fluently and easily, I mean? I receive a great many foreign friends, and as I am something of an invalid—or like to fancy myself one—I must have someone about me who can help me, not only with my guests, but in my correspondence with them. You have lived in France?"

"I was brought up there."

Dropping easily into the French language, which was evidently as familiar to her as her

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mother tongue, Lady Anne soon satisfied herself on that point. And then she gave me an approving nod.

"If you will come to me, I shall be very glad," she said. "And I think we shall get on together very well. But as you've given me your references, I think it is only fair to tell you something about myself."

"Oh, I don't want——" I began.

She interrupted me, as she had a way of doing.

"Why not?" said she. "It's wonderful to me how well-brought-up girls like you trust themselves in the houses of people they know nothing about."

"Well, I'm quite sure that you, Lady Anne——"

"You're quite sure of nothing about me," said she decisively. "And as I don't think it fair that the confidences should all be on one side, I'll tell you frankly that while I was abroad, where I lived for many years, I married, not very happily, and became a widow, but that I do not use my husband's name. My trustees have no objection to my reversion to my maiden name, so it is as Lady Anne Smeeth that I'm always known, though my real name is Lady Anne—something else. It's better that you should know this, as some of your friends will perhaps have heard of my marriage, and any comments they might make about it would puzzle you. Oh, and by the by, I ought to warn you that my principal trustee, Mr. Mossop, is looked upon as rather an alarming person by strangers. He is not very young, and his infirmities have not improved his temper, perhaps. But if you meet him about the house, don't be frightened; he has a room kept for him in my house, wherever I happen to be, and he comes and goes as he pleases. Sometimes I see nothing of him for months; as he was here three days ago, and again only a fortnight before, it may be a long time before he turns up again."

I wondered why Lady Anne should think it necessary to give me this elaborate warning concerning the unamiable Mr. Mossop. But it was kind of her, and I was touched by her thoughtfulness.

A week later I was installed at Lady Anne's, and was happier than I had ever been before since necessity had forced me to earn my own living.

My employer was kindness itself. The whole atmosphere of the little house was that of ease and luxury and the refinement of a cultivated taste; everything about the place was harmonious and charming, and although a closer inspection of Lady Anne herself confirmed her own statement that she was not the young woman she had appeared at first sight, the charm of her manner increased upon acquaintance, and it was not at all surprising to me that she gathered round her a circle far more interesting than that which usually surrounds the Englishwoman of forty who has neither very high rank nor very great wealth to give special attraction to her house.

Nothing could exceed the charm of the informal after-dinner receptions she held twice a week from nine to twelve o'clock. They were totally unlike any entertainment at which I had ever been present; and I, unsophisticated as I was, was much impressed by some of the names I heard, and by finding myself in the presence of people distinguished in various ways, of whom I had heard and read, but whom I had never even hoped to meet.

There were very few ladies at these receptions, compared with the number of gentlemen. But those that did come were often of high rank or social position, or distinguished in literature or art.

And, if I had been rendered at all curious by this circumstance, I should have been reassured by the fact that Lady Anne often received, in the afternoon, whole bevies of dull and dowdy ladies of undeniable rank and position, some of whom were connections of hers either by birth or by marriage, and all of whom made much of her, as if she had been a spoilt and favourite child.

It was a most delightful society, and I should not have had even a crumpled rose-leaf to complain about, but for the domestic friction between the only two of the servants who ever came in my way, and certain uneasy questions to which their little bickerings gave rise.

Susan Greening, Lady Anne's own maid, was, perhaps, not so very many years older than her mistress, but looked old enough to be her mother; she had one of those impenetrable faces so often found among confidential servants; and although she waited on her mistress with no more appearance of devotion or emotion than if she had been an automaton, yet it was known that her affection for her bordered on fierceness, and that any intrusion upon what she considered her rights she resented with passion.

Barton, the parlourmaid, on the other hand, was a much younger woman: a tall, thin person, with reddish hair and high

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cheek-bones, so neat and quick and clever and light of foot that she was a most valuable servant, and excited the jealousy of the older-established Greening, who kept a sort of watch over her mistress, lest the ease-loving

"'I don't like that girl.'"

lady should fall into the hands of the enemy—in other words, lest she should allow Barton any of those duties or privileges to which Greening considered she had an exclusive right.

One of those duties or rights was that of the care of Mr. Mossop's room, which was always kept locked, and to which nobody had access, during the absence of the trustee himself, but Greening and Lady Anne.

Mr. Mossop's room was on the first floor at the back directly under my own, and I was one day at the door of mine, ready dressed for a walk, when I was detained by a fierce encounter which was taking place on the landing below between the two upper servants.

"Why can't you attend to your own business?" were the first words I heard, uttered very sharply in Greening's voice.

"Bless you, my dear soul, I don't want to do anything else!" retorted Barton in a shrill soprano.

"Yes, you do. You're always trying to pry, though what there is to pry for, Goodness only knows!" retorted Greening.

"Not a bit of it," replied Barton. "You're very welcome to keep *Mr. Mossop's* room to yourself for what I care. I've seen all there is in it I want to see."

"What! Have you been stealing keys?" cried the other.

"No, I don't happen to be a thief," said Barton drily. "But I have my feelings, like anybody else, and when secrets are kept, I find them out—like anybody else."

"Secrets! Rubbish!" snapped Greening.

"That's it. *Rubbish!*" echoed Barton emphatically. "I got on the roof of the conservatory one day when I was turning out the drawing-room, and I found out all about Mr. Mossop that ever I want to know. Grand acquaintance, *Mr. Mossop!* He'd cut a pretty figure, wouldn't he, among my lady's fine friends, the Duke, and Lady Mara, and Sir Harry, and the rest!"

And she burst into a scornful laugh.

By this time I was on the stairs, but the women were too much excited either to heed my coming or to check themselves.

"I shall tell my lady how you speak of her friends and relations!" almost screamed the elder woman.

"Tell her, by all means, if you like!" retorted the parlourmaid. "You know best whether you'll be doing my lady a good turn

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by getting rid of me. You can't shut everybody's ears and mouths, you know, not if you were fifty middle-aged lady's-maids!" cried Barton, ignoring my presence altogether as I hurriedly went downstairs.

I knew that while both were jealous of each other, they were also both jealous of me, and of the kind indulgence with which Lady Anne treated me. She was one of those women who hate the sight of anything ugly or inharmonious, and as she had been pleased to discover hitherto unknown, and I think imaginary, beauties in my face and figure, it amused her to use me very much as a child uses a doll.

I was the gainer to a very handsome degree by this fancy of hers, for Lady Anne generally ended by making me a present of something pretty as a reward for the patience with which I lent myself as a "dummy," as I used laughingly to say. She had collected a good many precious and curious things upon her travels, and at one time she would deck me out in the costume of a Turkish lady, at another I would be taught to wear a Spanish *mantilla* and high tortoiseshell comb.

We had great fun over these dressing-up mornings, during which it was hard to believe that Lady Anne was not a girl herself, so enthusiastic did she become, and so heartily did she laugh, especially on one occasion when two of her sedate elderly cousins, Lady Mara and Lady Grace, came in while I was being tortured into an attitude, with *mantilla* and fan, which Lady Anne told me was "characteristically Spanish," but in which I must confess "I felt like a fool."

And then, before I had time to escape, the door opened, and there entered a most unexpected visitor, in the person of Sir Harry Rolveden, one of the youngest of the circle of Lady Anne's acquaintances, and the one whom I considered by far the nicest.

I felt so shy, so confused, when Sir Harry, instead of advancing, stood smiling just inside the room, leaning against the door, and pretending not to know who I was, that I felt the blood rush to my face and the tears to my eyes; and when he said: "Lady Anne, won't you introduce me?" with a mischievous eye fixed on me all the time, I felt, I scarcely know why, ready to sink into the earth.

Lady Anne laughed too, and was about to join in the pleasantry by introducing me by some high-sounding title, when I, suddenly catching the freezing eye of one of the old ladies, was seized with such a panic of dismay and shame that, with a hoarse and broken excuse of having—I forget what—a letter to write or a parcel to post, I left the room.

I would have remained in my own room, when I had divested myself of my borrowed plumes, until the visitors had gone away; but Barton came to tell me that Lady Anne wished me to return to the drawing-room to pour out the tea; so, after hastily bathing my eyes to remove the traces of tears of vexation, of which I was ashamed, I went demurely downstairs and tried to sneak into the room, from the door nearest to the conservatory, without being heard by the chattering circle in the front room.

The nearest of the two outstanding walls, which marked where folding-doors had once stood, formed a screen, behind which I slid into a chair behind the tea-table, and began to pour out tea as noiselessly as I could.

But I had not managed to enter unheard; for, a moment later, Sir Harry Rolveden glided into the chair nearest to mine and said, with a mischievous look in his eyes—

"And pray what has become of the Spanish lady, Miss Purley?"

"She has gone back to Spain, Sir Harry," answered I, with my cheeks aflame, "never to return."

"Never? Oh, I hope she'll think better of that cruel resolution," said he insinuatingly. "She did look so nice, nicer than any woman I ever met. And I can't think why she looked so shy and frightened, either. Why was it?"

"I don't like to be made ridiculous," said I, struggling with my mortification.

He repeated the word in a low voice, with an intonation full of significance.

"Ridiculous! That is the last word I should have used. Fascinating, handsome, anything you please *but* ridiculous. Why do you say that?"

"It is ridiculous to be caught dressed up as if one were going to a fancy-dress ball! And trying to look Spanish!"

"You didn't succeed in that certainly. You looked shy, with a very English—and graceful shyness. I myself have some Spanish things—fans and lace, and some beautiful old Italian things too, and a set of Moorish garments which I should love to see you in. I've been a bit of a traveller, as well as Lady Anne, and I'll wager that for every curiosity she has brought back I've got a hundred. My place is full of them."

I looked at him in surprise.

"You look as if you didn't believe me!"

"I didn't mean to look like that," I said hastily. "All I meant was that you don't

look—how shall I say it?—*grizzled* enough for a traveller! I thought they were always bald and the colour of old leather!"

Sir Harry laughed. Certainly he was none of those things; but now that I saw him for the first time in full daylight, I noticed that there were little wrinkled corners in his face which spoke to thirty-four-or-five years of life rather than to the twenty-six or twenty-seven with which I should have been inclined to credit him.

"One can get over the ground so quickly nowadays," said he. "I travelled in the Service, and then shooting, and, last of all, I've turned kernoozer."

"Kernoozer! What's that?" said I.

"Persuade Lady Anne to accept the invitation I'll give you both, to come and dine with me one evening at my chambers, and then you'll see."

"Oh, you'll never get Lady Anne to come," said I rather regretfully. "She doesn't go out at all, except for a drive in the afternoons."

"I must see if I can't get her to break her rule in my favour."

"I'm sure you won't succeed. She isn't strong, and the excitement of going out in the evening would be too much for her."

Sir Harry laughed rather incredulously.

"Coming to dine quietly with an old fogey like me," he said, "wouldn't be half so exciting as the receptions she holds here."

At that very moment Lady Anne herself came to see what had become of the tea, which I was pouring out perfunctorily, without finding Sir Harry of much use as an assistant. He jumped up and attacked her at once on the subject of the proposed little dinner, telling her, on her prompt refusal, that she didn't know what a good thing she was missing, and then proceeding to describe his rooms with a profusion of detail which I thought rather extravagant, but which seemed to please and interest Lady Anne.

When I was at last able to leave my corner and join the visitors, who were now much more numerous, and of the usual elderly lady type for the most part, I found a corner where I soon discovered that I was within hearing of Lady Grace, who was answering some questions put by another visitor.

"And how *is* she now?" the second lady, whom I did not know, was asking.

And as she looked at Lady Anne and spoke in rather a mysterious manner, I was interested in the prompt answer.

"Oh, quite well now, *per—fectly* well," replied Lady Grace emphatically. "She has an excellent doctor, and old Greening is still with her, you know."

Suddenly their voices dropped, and the next words I heard Lady Grace say were—

"Luckily she was using her husband's name then, which nobody here even knows except her own relations and old friends."

I suppose I was looking rather startled, for Lady Grace, happening to turn her eyes in my direction at that moment, drew herself up rigidly and, staring fixedly at me, said to her companion, in a clear undertone which was meant to reach my ears—

"I don't like that girl. Anne spoils her; but she'll find her out by and by."

I felt the blood rush to my face at this insult, at the same moment that Lady Grace's companion said: "Hush! She can hear you!"

But Lady Grace was shameless; rising from her seat, she came deliberately to where I sat, and asked icily—

"I suppose you are very happy here, Miss Purley?"

I was taken aback by this question, which was put almost as if it were an attack, and I stammered a little as I answered—

"Yes, I'm very happy."

"There are not many women who treat their companions as Lady Anne does you."

By this time I had recovered my composure a little, and raising my head, I said—

"She is very kind, very kind indeed. But I suppose it is partly because I'm just the sort of companion she wanted."

I think it was Lady Grace's turn to be rather taken aback by this answer, for her eyes fell and she said quickly—

"Oh, of course, of course. I have no wish to say anything to seem unkind or to—to——"

"To hurt my feelings?" suggested I.

"Certainly not. I only wanted to say that it will be wiser for you to remember that Lady Anne is a sort of spoilt child, full of caprices, and that she may suddenly take another fancy into her head which will dispossess her fancy for you."

"Why do you tell me this?" I asked suddenly.

"Well, frankly, I think you are rather young for the sort of position into which you have been thrust."

"But that's no reason for your thinking there is anything to find out about me, Lady Grace," I replied with spirit. "And I must remind you that what I heard you say was meant for my ears; and it seems to me it

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would be more straightforward of you to tell Lady Anne that she had better send me away on account of my youth, than wait till you have been able to invent some better excuse."

"Invent! Invent! Do you know what you are saying?" said Lady Grace with steely anger.

"Yes," I said. "Since you take it for granted there is something to be found out about me, I'm sure you are ready to take more for granted still. But I must ask you whether you think your conduct to me fair. Might I not, on my side, ask why there is so much mystery made about Mr. Mossop's room?"

The moment I had uttered these words I was sorry, for I saw at once that Lady Grace knew nothing about this little domestic mystery. As I checked myself, she, losing her presence of mind, asked quickly—

"Mr. Mossop! Who is Mr. Mossop?"

I reddened, stammered, and said in a guilty voice—

"He is one of Lady Anne's trustees."

Lady Grace's eyes wandered from my face to that of Lady Anne, who was talking vivaciously to her other guests. Then she said hurriedly—

"Oh, oh! yes, of course, he must be one of the trustees of—of her marriage settlement—I mean——"

She had said much more in those few words than she had intended, but as she checked herself, I said quietly—

"Yes, I knew Lady Anne had been married. She told me so herself. And I quite understand, too, that, as she chooses to be known by her maiden name, she does not wish her marriage to be talked about. No doubt, too, she can't talk much about her trustees, since that matter concerns her marriage also."

I said this in a very assured manner, but indeed strange questions were already rising in my own mind, as I saw that they were rising in that of Lady Grace.

And even as I thought these things, there darted into my mind a possible explanation of the household mystery. Was Mr. Mossop Lady Anne's husband? And a husband of whom, for some reason, she had little reason to be proud?

Unfortunately I could not undo what I had done. I knew, as Lady Grace left me, that she meant to make inquiries which she was not wanted to make. And when she told Lady Anne that she must go and see "dear To-to" and give him a bit of sugar, I knew very well that instead of seeing the parrot, who was in his cage in the dining-room, she meant to make an excursion in search of information about Mr. Mossop's room.

She had scarcely left the room when Sir Harry Rolveden came to me and said, with an air of great triumph—

"What was our bet, Miss Purley? I think you were to pay me a dozen pairs of gloves if I got Lady Anne's acceptance of my invitation? Well, just make a note of my size: I take seven and a half, and grey is my colour."

I laughed and told him I hoped he was not in a great hurry for them, but had a few pairs by him to go on with. And then I said I supposed he was not serious about the acceptance.

"Ask Lady Anne yourself," said he. "I'm exceedingly proud of my victory, for she tells me it's the first invitation she's accepted since her return to England, a year or more ago. Good-bye. Don't forget the gloves—seven and a half—a nice mouse-grey. And Lady Anne and I will have an awfully jolly time dressing you up. I'm longing to see you in a *yashmak*. Oh, and I've a pair of Indian earrings, which you shall have to keep, as the children say, if you'll only let Lady Anne and me see how you look in them."

When her guests were all gone, I was rather alarmed to find that a slight but marked change had come over Lady Anne, and I wondered whether Lady Grace had begun to torment her by questions.

It was as if a sort of cloud hung over her spirits; and when Greening came gliding into the room, she glared at me and then looked at her mistress, and back at me again, with a look of acute distress which moved my sympathy in spite of myself.

Lady Anne did not look up. And the maid retreated to the back drawing-room with a glance at me which I rightly took as an invitation to follow her out of the room.

I did so, and Greening led me into the hall and turned upon me at once, almost savagely—

"It's a great pity that a young lady like you hasn't the sense to hold her tongue about the affairs of the house she's living in!" she said sharply, though in a very low voice.

"If you mean that I mentioned Mr. Mossop's room to Lady Grace," said I, "it is quite true that I did. But as I've heard you say yourself there was no mystery about it, I don't see how you can suppose I thought there was any harm in mentioning it."

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"'Supposing we do some shopping?'"

Greening saw the force of this, for she then said, less aggressively, in a sullen tone—

"There is no Mr. Mossop, you know. Lady Anne, who is as full of fancies as a child, has chosen to give that name to the room at the back. But it's only a joke, and nobody but her and myself has ever been in it. So now you see the harm and the talk that might come about by your speaking of it to Lady Grace!"

This explanation was so absurd that I made no answer at all, but, with a little inclination of the head, left the maid and went back to Lady Anne, who did not appear to have noticed my absence.

As I sat thinking over all I had heard, I became more and more convinced that Mr. Mossop was Lady Anne's husband, and that there was some circumstance connected with him which made it desirable for him to keep his movements secret. And on the very next day something happened which confirmed me in this belief.

The evening passed heavily. Lady Anne roused herself to dress for dinner, but she was unusually silent, unusually dull and absent-minded, though her tone towards me showed that the change in her was not occasioned by anything that I had said or done.

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I tried to rouse her by asking her whether it was true that Sir Harry had got her promise to dine with him, but she only looked at me, nodded, and turned her head quickly away, as if the suggestion had had some secret terrors for her.

The strangeness of this circumstance struck me in turn with an oppressive sense that something uncanny was going to happen, so that we ate in silence, and I felt glad when dinner was over and we returned to the drawing-room, where we passed the evening in almost the usual manner.

I went to bed oppressed and miserable, hoping against hope to find her in her old bright mood in the morning. But at breakfast I found in her yet another change, and began now to understand that "eccentricity" of which I had previously seen in her no trace. She was restless and irritable, and unable to keep still for two minutes at a time.

It was not until the victoria came round after luncheon for Lady Anne's habitual drive in the Park, that the maid took me aside when I came downstairs in my hat and outdoor things, and whispered hastily—

"Don't let her tire herself, miss. Persuade her to come back early. If you don't, *she'll be ill!*"

She spoke with so much earnestness and emphasis that I felt myself shiver with apprehension; and though Lady Anne seemed to have quite recovered her spirits and to be enjoying the prospect of her drive, I felt that I was looking at her askance and wondering what my powers of persuasion would amount to.

I soon found out.

Scarcely had we gone once along the drive in Hyde Park, which, deserted as it always was at this early season of the year, was our daily excursion, when she turned to me and said—

"Supposing we do some shopping? Do you like shopping?"

I was taken by surprise, and at once I saw that Greening's warning had not been unwarranted. Lady Anne was never allowed to pay calls or to go shopping, by her doctor's express orders, and I gently reminded her of the fact.

"You are not to walk at all, you know, he said," I ended coaxingly.

"Well, I'm sure I'm a very good child," replied Lady Anne, laughing brightly; "for I've never walked half-a-dozen steps out of doors since you've been with me! Now, have I?"

"And you have had your reward," I replied, laughing back. "For all your friends say they've never seen you looking better!"

"But what's the use of being quite well if you can never do anything you want to do?" retorted she.

And, not heeding my pathetic remonstrances, she told the coachman to drive to Bond Street, and, laughing at me, produced a well-filled purse, which she shook in my face, telling me that she had secreted it "when Greening wasn't looking!"

"I had quite made up my mind to enjoy myself for once," she added. "And as for my overtiring myself, I never felt stronger in my life."

Overwhelmed as I was with apprehension, after the warning I had had, I could not but acknowledge that there seemed to be little the matter with her. She looked her very best in her large black picture-hat and dark furs; and I thought, as she stepped nimbly out of the carriage and crossed the pavement to one of the Bond Street jewellers' shops, that I had never seen a handsomer, statelier, or more graceful woman, or one who looked less like a helpless invalid.

She wanted a small pendant, and the profusion of pretty things they showed us charmed me. But when she had chosen this, she let herself be coaxed to see other things, and ended by buying not only the pendant and a ring for herself, but a sweet little brooch for me in the shape of a golden bird with outstretched wings, with a pearl hanging from its mouth.

She had spent nearly twenty pounds, but she was not yet satisfied.

"Now," she said, as we re-entered the carriage, "we'll go and buy veils, and then we'll finish up by a look round the Stores."

I protested again, and again she, now radiant and cheerful as the evening before she had been depressed, carried her point, and told me that I was not to "give her away" to the doctor, and he would never find out that she had broken his orders.

Indeed, I secretly thought that Greening had made a great fuss about nothing, and that the pleasure poor Lady Anne evidently enjoyed so much was not too dearly paid for by a little fatigue.

So we went to Regent Street, where Lady Anne bought gloves and veils and a pretty fan, and then we went to Liberty's, where she bought me an Indian silver bangle, and finally to the Stores, where we spent nearly two hours.

When we got home, Greening scowled at

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us, and especially at me, though she might have known her mistress well enough to be sure that no persuasions could have restrained a spoilt child like Lady Anne in any of her whims.

"You'll be ill to-night, my lady, for certain," was her snappish comment, at which Lady Anne only laughed and shook her head, and swept past Greening and me and into the house, where she went straight into the dining-room and shut the door, which I took to be a sign that she would not be "talked to," and that her maid's services were not at present required.

I escaped to my room as quickly as I could, very much interested as to the upshot of all this; for while Greening certainly had experience of her mistress, I found it scarcely possible to believe that the little exertion, which had certainly pleased and interested Lady Anne, could have done her so much harm as the maid pretended.

My belief was confirmed that evening, for it was one of her reception-nights, and, instead of appearing over-fatigued, Lady Anne had never before, during my stay with her, looked so brilliantly handsome, nor shown so much animation as she did in the course of those three hours, from nine to twelve, that her guests remained.

She had the art of dressing well, and a figure and bearing eminently adapted to show off her dresses to the best advantage. In a lovely gown of cream satin covered with splendid lace, with a great spray of diamonds across her bodice and another in her hair, Lady Anne, who carried the pretty little pearl-handled fan she had bought that afternoon in her bejewelled white hand, looked, I thought, more like a princess than any woman I had ever seen.

Even when the last of her guests had gone, and when she might fairly have been expected to look tired, she looked brighter and less fatigued than I. But a strange misgiving suddenly flashed through my mind, as I noticed that she wore the little pearl and diamond ring she had bought that afternoon on the same finger with two others which must have been worth three or four hundred pounds apiece.

The things she had bought that day, and upon which she had spent nearly fifty pounds, had represented sheer waste of money; and there came into my mind the thought that perhaps she was by nature extremely extravagant, and that when the buying fit came upon her, she threw money away just as she had done to-day, without a thought of its value or of the consequences of her lavishness.

Not that Lady Anne was poor; there was about her every sign that she was not. But between the expenditure of an ample allowance on the one hand and unbridled extravagance on the other, there is a wide gulf, and it seemed not unreasonable to suppose that it was this gulf which she was in danger of overstepping.

The excitement of the day had tired me out, and I fell asleep quickly that night. I woke up not long after with a sense of alarm, and at once became conscious that there were unusual sounds in the house, which made me ask myself whether burglars had got in.

I leapt out of bed and went to the door, but was afraid at first to unlock it. I heard the soft creaking of the stairs—not the flight immediately below me, but the lower stairs leading from the ground floor. Just at the moment that I had summoned courage enough to turn the key in order that I might rouse the servants, I heard the sound of a key turned in the door of the room below me, and I knew that someone was entering Mr. Mossop's room.

That Mr. Mossop had arrived on one of his mysterious visits, I felt sure; that he was Lady Anne's husband, I was more than ever convinced; that there was something wrong about him, I could, alas! feel no less certain.

I stood in the middle of my room in an agony of doubt and suspense. I pitied Lady Anne with all my heart, and, knowing her and loving her, I felt sure that such share as she had in the mystery which surrounded him was an innocent and an honest one.

When it was that the talking in the room below ceased, I could not make out. I heard nothing more distinctly enough to feel sure that it was not the work of my imagination; and presently I went shivering back to bed, with a vague but perfectly natural sense of uneasiness and alarm at my heart.

If I expected to catch sight of the mysterious Mr. Mossop in the morning, I was disappointed. I thought Greening looked at me with particularly searching eyes when I met her on the stairs, but she asked no questions, and neither did I.

Lady Anne did not come down to breakfast; and though the daylight had brought a revulsion of feeling, and I began to laugh at some of my fears, I was uneasy and restless and in a tremor of agitation, when I

heard Lady Anne's step on the stairs, as to the mood in which I might find her.

To my surprise and delight, she was as bright and brilliant as she had been on the previous day, and I joined her in laughing at the superstition that she was unable to bear the slightest exertion. On the contrary, she declared that the previous day's amusement had done her good, and she proposed that we should pay some calls that afternoon, since she had proved so much stronger than had been expected. So together we visited two or three of her friends, and everywhere Lady Anne was greeted with as much pleasure as surprise.

Lady Anne went to lie down for an hour before dinner; and as I came out of her room, where I had been arranging the cushions of the sofa for her, I was just in time to see the door of Mr. Mossop's room closing; and as I caught sight of Greening's skirt disappearing within, I made a bold dash across the few intervening yards of carpet, and thrust my own person into the aperture just far enough to get a look into the mysterious room.

Greening was so much astonished that she could not prevent my having time to cast round the room a comprehensive glance which scarcely missed a single feature of its somewhat singular appearance.

The bed was made; clean towels hung on the rail; the blinds and curtains were all arranged as in a constantly occupied room. But every space and every corner, the table, the sofa, and all the chairs were filled with trunks, tin cases, wooden chests, and packages of all sorts, for the most part strapped and corded, and all bearing either the initials: "J. H. M.," or the full name: "John Henry Mossop."

While Greening was recovering her breath for a burst of indignation at my audacity, I, satisfied with what I had seen, nodded pertly and asked in a low voice—

"So Mr. Mossop appears to be a commercial traveller?"

"There's no—no——" gasped Greening.

But before she could finish her stammering protest, I ran laughing away.

I cannot say that I was pleased with the result of my discovery; on the contrary, I felt that it was so extraordinary that it confirmed me in my wish to leave the house, where I could not but feel an uneasy consciousness that there was something beneath the pleasant surface of life.

I wanted to open the matter with Lady Anne that very evening, but she was so kind and so charming that I had not the heart to speak; and when the last post brought a note from Sir Harry Rolveden, reminding her with great mock solemnity of her promise to dine with him on the following evening, she was so much amused and interested that I caught the infection, and all thought of what I had had to say was pushed into the background.

On the following evening, therefore, we drove to the house, near St. James's Street, where Sir Harry's chambers were. Lady Anne looked radiant in black, with pearls round her neck, and diamonds in her fair hair and in her dress, and superb diamond and pearl bracelets over her long, black gloves.

She had insisted on lending me some jewellery, to brighten up the somewhat sober appearance of my one evening dress, a white Japanese silk, which had seen some service; I think I felt rather vain when I saw myself in the glass, decked out in the beautiful Indian necklace she lent me.

When we reached our destination, I could scarcely believe my eyes, so beautiful was the sight that met them. I could not help thinking that Sir Harry left us alone in the drawing-room for some minutes on purpose that we should be fully impressed by what he had to show us.

The suite of three rooms was done up with an Oriental splendour, equalled by nothing I have ever seen. Such rich tapestries; such glorious effects of lights in lanterns hung by silver chains; such pictures in exquisitely carved frames on velvety walls; such brocades; such crystals; such splendour of chairs with carved arms and embroidered cushions, of jewelled weapons, dainty cabinets, and rare and lovely things of all kinds, I have never even imagined.

"Hadn't you heard of Sir Harry's collection?" Lady Anne asked. "He came into a fortune of twenty-five thousand a year, some time ago, and for such a young man he has the choicest collection in England."

Before I could answer, Sir Harry came in, and with him a gentleman old enough to be his father, whom he introduced to us as his uncle, Mr. Rolveden.

Just as much as I liked Sir Harry's open, handsome face, so did I dislike the cold, critical expression of his uncle's. Lady Anne insisted on making a tour of the room without delay, and as she had knowledge as well as taste, whereas I could lay claim to neither, she examined, admired, criticised, while I remained mute except to express a timid acquiescence when called upon.

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"He did not leave the house till he had searched it in every corner."

Sir Harry would not, however, allow me to be left out of the conversation, and he would glide behind the other two, to show me some rare trinket, or some beautiful miniature, with a kindness which thrilled me with a strange sort of gratitude; for in this brilliant company, swept along, as it were, through vistas of art treasures, in the swirl of Lady Anne's silks and diamonds, I was feeling a very poor little Cinderella indeed.

"I see you like Oriental jewellery—and I'm not surprised," he added in a rather lower tone, glancing from the Indian necklace I wore to my reddening cheeks. "Now see what you think of this."

And he took from a cabinet which looked like an Aladdin's cave of curious jewels, yards and yards of a wonderful necklace, from which dangled loose pearls, emeralds, amethysts, and diamonds in barbaric and dazzling beauty.

"It's too beautiful for me even to admire," I said simply. "Such things as you have here are more than I can even appreciate. And this necklace that I am wearing is not mine; it was lent me by Lady Anne."

I saw Mr. Rolveden, who was talking to Lady Anne, turn at these words and look at the jewel on my neck. But he said nothing, and Sir Harry went on—

"It becomes you perfectly. I do wish you would let us see the effect of some of these Indian things upon you! Why not let *me* lend you some ornaments, as well as Lady Anne?"

"Not for worlds," said I quickly. "As I've told you, I don't care to have to be a doll, even for Lady Anne."

He bowed slightly as he turned away and replaced the necklace in its corner, and I felt sorry that my tone had been so decided. But what could I do? There was something I did not quite like in wearing borrowed ornaments, even to please Lady Anne, and to suffer myself to be decked out in more splendour to amuse strangers would have been even less to my taste.

Conscious as I was of Sir Harry's special kindness to me, I was also aware that it was counterbalanced by a quite special animosity on the part of his uncle. With the cleverness of a well-bred man, Mr. Rolveden contrived over and over again in the course of the evening to say just the

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right thing to inflict upon me some little wound; yet all the while nobody but myself could have been aware, as I was, that he spoke with the particular intention of inflicting pain.

I was not too stupid to understand the reason of this. I gathered that Mr. Rolveden, who, though an elderly man, was not old, was Sir Harry's nearest relation, and that the elderly uncle was very anxious for his nephew, the baronet, to remain a bachelor; so that every woman who had neither a hump nor a squint became Mr. Rolveden's mortal enemy as soon as she came within the range of Sir Harry's grey eyes.

It was inevitable that, knowing what I did know, I should become, as the evening wore on, colder and colder to Sir Harry, in order to show his uncle that I was no designing girl, as he chose to believe.

When at last we went away, Sir Harry contrived to get a word alone with me as we all went downstairs to the front door together, and what he said was—

"I shall come round one of these days to find out why you have chosen to be so unkind to-night."

He gave me one look which made me hold my breath and brought the blood to my cheeks. The next moment Lady Anne and I were in the carriage, and I was leaning back, with my eyes closed, trying to keep back the most foolish tears, surely, that ever came welling to a girl's eyes.

Next day Lady Anne breakfasted in her own room. She was tired, silent, irritable, and nervous, though not ill, as Greening pretended. While I was opening her letters for her, Lady Grace was announced, and Lady Anne sent word that she was to be shown upstairs.

I at once left the room and went down to the dining-room, passing Lady Grace, who gave me only an icy inclination of the head by way of greeting. With my heart beating very fast, and more than ever resolved to leave a house where Lady Anne's own relations and servants treated me with marked incivility, I went into the dining-room and took up my work-basket. But I could not keep still, for soon I heard, in Lady Anne's room, which was immediately above, sounds of passionate voices, and of steps hurrying up and down, up and down the room. Louder and louder grew the discussion, which was evidently going on between the ladies, and I was in a panic of vague, nervous alarm when a diversion occurred. I saw coming up to the house, with an expression on his face even more forbidding than that he had worn on the previous evening, Sir Harry's uncle, Mr. Rolveden.

I heard him go into the drawing-room, and presently I heard the voices above cease, and then Lady Grace came downstairs

I wondered what this early visit of Mr. Rolveden's could mean; for it was scarcely twelve o'clock. Presently Lady Grace went upstairs again, and, after a few minutes, returned once more to the drawing-room.

Then she and Mr. Rolveden came out into the hall together, and I heard Lady Grace say soothingly—

"It will be all right. You will see Lady Anne had no idea there was any danger, you know, under her own eyes."

"It was very unwise of her—very," retorted Mr. Rolveden's sharp voice. "Understand that I must insist——"

What he insisted upon I could not hear, but Lady Grace said: "Oh, of course, of course." And he went away, not yet satisfied, as I judged by his tone.

The next moment she came into the dining-room, and I saw at once, by the expression of her face, that she had something disagreeable to say to me.

"Miss Purley," she said at once, "I am sorry to have to tell you that Lady Anne has been taken very ill, and that we shall want all the accommodation the house contains for the nurses. I hope it will be convenient to you to leave the house at once. You understand, of course, that this is no fault of yours, and that Lady Anne or I will be happy to give you a reference for another situation. And Lady Anne wishes to be liberal in the matter of——"

I was thunderstruck. Of course, I knew that there was not a word of truth in what she was saying; but what the real truth might be I had no idea. One thing only was clear—I was to be got rid of, and with as little delay as possible. Trembling from head to foot, I stammered out, with my eyes full of tears—

"Can't I see Lady Anne just for one moment, if I promise not to speak?"

"I'm sorry to say that's quite impossible. The greatest favour you can do us all is to let us have your room at once."

I crept upstairs, feeling like a wild animal driven from its hole. This brutality was so terrible, so unexpected, that it left me without even spirit enough to make a protest. I stole upstairs, packed my trunks, and found Greening waiting outside my door with the news that a cab was ready.

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"Is she really ill?" I whispered to her.

"Look here," she whispered back not unkindly, "never you mind about that. She had no unkind wish towards *you*, you may be quite sure!"

With this vague and mysterious speech I had to be content; and she took me downstairs, on purpose, as I knew, that I might make no attempt to see Lady Anne in spite of everybody.

I hurried down, was put into the cab, and drove away, unable to see or to think, to the address I gave—that of two old maiden aunts of mine who lived at Fulham. Before I got to their house I had dried my eyes and made up my mind that the story of Lady Anne's sudden illness, which had been given to me, was the best I could give to them; and though both the old ladies were amazed beyond measure to see me appear so suddenly among them, they received my tale with much less incredulity than I felt, and welcomed me with great kindness.

But the more I thought, the more I felt that I must have an explanation of my abrupt dismissal; and on the following morning I had just dressed to go to Lady Anne's and demand a full explanation from somebody, when one of my aunts came up with a pale face to tell me that there was a man downstairs, who would not give his name, but who wanted to see me.

In an instant my thoughts flew to Mr. Mossop, and I wondered whether I was going to have an explanation brought to me, instead of my having to go in search of it.

I ran downstairs into the little dining-room, where I found a tall, stout man, who saluted me civilly and said—

"Miss Purley, I believe?"

"Yes," said I. "Are you Mr. Mossop?"

"No, miss. I'll be plain with you. I come from Scotland Yard, and I've come about some jewellery which has disappeared from Sir Harry Rolveden's."

I uttered a low cry, and for the moment doubts and fears crowded in upon me so fast that I grew sick and giddy, and had to sit down—or, rather, to tumble into a seat—and keep silence for a few moments before I was able again to open my lips.

In a few seconds I recovered and found that the detective was watching me narrowly.

"I suppose—you think," stammered I at last, "that—that I'm—a thief—because—because I'm—I'm—so frightened. But—but——"

"Don't you worry about what I think, miss," said he; "but give your mind to helping us to sift this. You have an idea, I think, as to what has become of the jewels?"

The blood flew to my face, for indeed this was the truth, though I don't know how he found it out.

"I haven't the least idea," I protested hastily. "But it was not I who took them; and if you like to search my trunks, you can do so."

I don't know whether this was what he intended to do, but he accepted my offer, and did not leave the house till he had searched it in every corner, much to the indignation of my two aunts, from whom it had been impossible to keep the facts of the detective's visit.

I asked him no questions whatever—indeed, I dared not. But when he went away, I at once wrote the following note and sent it off by special messenger to Sir Harry Rolveden:—

"SIR,—

"It seems scarcely possible to believe that you can so far have forgotten what is due to your own sense of honour as to set a detective to track down as a thief a girl whom you considered two nights ago worthy to be your guest. That you have done such a thing is, I am sure, due to the advice of others. However, since you have done this thing, I beg that you will go through with it and give me the opportunity of disproving the charge you have so unworthily brought against me. "JEANNETTE PURLEY."

Disappointed as I had been in Sir Harry, I own I thought this letter, following as it would upon what I believed to be the detective's conviction of my innocence, would bring Sir Harry dashing up to my aunts' house full of contrition.

But hour after hour passed, and it was not until late that evening that a hansom dashed up to the door, and I sprang up, with my hands locked together and the tears starting to my eyes.

A moment later the door of the room opened, and Sir Harry himself strode in.

But was it Sir Harry? I could scarcely believe it, so grey and haggard did he look. He came straight towards me, took both my hands in his, which were icy cold, and said, not a bit apologetically, but loudly and almost harshly—

"You little idiot! how could you think I'd do such a thing?"

The surprise of this address, when I had

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expected a tone of deepest apology, took my breath away, and for about the twentieth time that day I burst out crying.

"There, there," he said, "don't cry; don't cry! Go, for Heaven's sake, child, and get me something to eat, if it's only a dog-biscuit! Ever since I got your wretched little letter I've been mad, and—and—— There, there, I'll tell you all about it when I've been fed."

I was sobbing away to my heart's content, but it was now with joy to know that, whatever had happened, he had at least never had of me the suspicions I had supposed.

My aunts and I, when I had introduced the old ladies in a confused and hurried way, all set to work to provide our visitor with some sort of scrambling picnic of a meal. And when he had refreshed himself with cold mutton and sardines and bread-and-butter and some particularly thin claret, Sir Harry told us, in strict confidence, a story which made us hold our breath.

"The moment I got your express," said he to me, "I went round to Lady Anne's, got her old mummy of a maid into a corner, and fairly frightened the whole story out of her. It seems Lady Anne Smeeth is a kleptomaniac."

"Ah!" said I. "I never guessed it till the detective came, but before he left I felt sure of it."

"Yes," said Sir Harry. "It appears the craving to steal only comes on her by fits and starts, and that Greening, who has been with her fifteen years, always knows when the fit is coming on."

"Why doesn't she tell people?" burst out one of my aunts.

"For a very good reason," replied Sir Harry. "It seems she married an American, who knew nothing of her failing, and who declined to believe in it when he had proof of it. So he separated from her, and she fell then into hands less sympathetic, for being caught in the act of annexing a valuable diamond, she was arrested, tried, convicted, and actually served a short term of imprisonment in the States.

"When she was released," went on Sir Harry, "having been wise enough to make very little fuss about it—for her cunning is extraordinary—old Greening brought her back to England, where she has managed, by care and tact, to keep her pretty well out of harm's way until her last outbreak, which was too serious to be passed over. Greening says she brought home with her—that day you and she went out shopping—thousands of pounds' worth of jewellery and fine lace among other things."

"What!" cried I, incredulous. "Before my eyes?"

"Before your eyes. It seems she carried them into the house, stuffed them into corners of the dining-room till night, when she carried them upstairs, into a locked room, where she keeps her spoils secured in parcels labelled with a made-up name."

"Mr. Mossop!" shrieked I, springing to my feet with sudden enlightenment.

"That's it. Greening took me up and showed me the room, and, by Jove! the old lady hasn't wasted her time! I can't imagine how it is that all the big shopkeepers in London are not at her heels!"

"But why—how——" I stammered.

"How did *you* come to be suspected? Why, my stupid old uncle, finding yesterday morning that about two thousand pounds' worth of Indian jewels and old snuff-boxes were missing from one of my cabinets, took it into his absurd head that you were the culprit, and, of course, without consulting me, went round to Lady Anne's."

"And he was delighted to do it," I said sharply. "He showed that he disliked me."

Sir Harry, who looked a little less ghost-like after the sardines and sour claret, smiled with great significance.

"There was a reason for that," he said.

"What reason," said I aggressively.

He smiled, paused, and said more drily than ever: "Oh, I'll tell you presently. At any rate, he saw Lady Grace, and that very silly and rather wicked woman, instead of telling the truth, which she must have guessed, made a last frantic attempt to shield her cousin by saying that *you* were a kleptomaniac, and that you were staying with Lady Anne, who was trying to cure you! Whether my uncle believed this or not, I don't know, but he was fool enough to go to Scotland Yard and have you traced, in the hope of finding that you were actuated by something worse than mania."

I was so much shocked by the whole story, recalling as I did fact after fact which confirmed it, that I sat for some minutes unable to speak or even to think clearly.

I came quite to myself on hearing the door shut and finding that I was alone with Sir Harry. He rushed at the opportunity which, it seems, he had been waiting for.

"Do you know," he said hurriedly, "why my uncle wanted to prove this ugly thing?"

I mumbled something and hung my head.

"Oh, you *do* know," said he. "Well, suppose you have your revenge?"

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"'Oh, child, I thought you'd run away from me!'"

"What—what do you mean, Sir Harry?"

"Can't you guess?"

I did guess—and quite right, as it appeared, for he gave me a kiss instead of letting me speak.

I pushed him away a little and said brokenly: "It's wicked of me to listen to you, Sir Harry, when I ought to be thinking how I can do something for poor Lady Anne. I feel I ought to, for she was kind to me and fond of me; and now that I know——"

"You shall do something," he interrupted gravely. "When you are Lady Rolveden, you will have position and influence, and you shall persuade Lady Anne's friends to take the proper course, to give up all idea of concealing her propensities, which have grown past concealment, and to make a practice of having her watched wherever she goes."

"Why haven't they done this before?"

"Because they didn't want the story of her American experiences to be known, for the family's sake. You can understand that, can't you?"

Of course I could understand it, though the plan which had failed so signally seemed none the less foolish.

That very evening I insisted on being taken back to Lady Anne's; and anything more pathetic never happened to me in all my life than when I came into the drawing-room with Sir Harry, and found the poor lady crying on the sofa, with Greening crying on her knees beside her.

"Oh, child, I thought you'd run away from me!" cried poor Lady Anne.

"Not yet, but she's going to!" cried Sir Harry, who had tears in his own eyes.

As for me, I was sobbing my heart out. And while we were all in our hearts making plans for taking care of this most harmless of involuntary criminals for the future, we all talked about trifles and furtively wiped our eyes, in the most ludicrous manner in the world. And next day, furtively, clandestinely, Greening and I shut ourselves in Mr. Mossop's room and began the task of sorting the spoils and finding out the real owners of the accumulations of Lady Anne's trustee.

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MOLLY, THE MEASLES, AND THE MISSING WILL.

BY E. NESBIT.

E all think a great deal too much of ourselves. We all believe, every man, woman, and child of us, in our very insidest inside heart, that no one else in the world is at all like us, and that things happen to us that happen to no one else. Now, this is a great mistake, because, however different we may be in the colour of our hair and eyes, the inside part, the part that we feel and suffer with, is pretty much alike in all of us. No one seems to know this except me. That is why people won't tell you the really wonderful things that happen to them; they think you are so different that you could never believe the wonderful things. But of course you are not different really, and you can believe wonderful things as easily as anybody else. For instance, you will be able to believe this story quite easily, for, though it didn't happen to you, that was merely an accident. It might have happened quite as easily to you or anyone else, as it happened to Maria Toodlethwaite Carruthers.

You will already have felt a little sorry for Maria, and you will have thought that I might have chosen a prettier name for her. And so I might. But I did not do the choosing; her parents did that. And they called her Maria after an aunt who was disagreeable, and would have been more disagreeable than ever if the baby had been called Enid or Elaine, or Vivien, or any of the pretty names that will readily occur to you. She was called Toodlethwaite after the eminent uncle of that name who had an office in London and an office in Liverpool, and was said to be rolling in money.

"I *should* like to see Uncle Toodlethwaite rolling in his money," said Maria; "but he never does it when I'm about." The third name, Carruthers, was Maria's father's name; and she often felt thankful that it was no worse—it might so easily have been Snooks or Prosser.

Of course, no one called Maria Maria except her Aunt Maria herself. Her Aunt Eliza, who was very refined, always wrote in the improving books that she gave Maria on her birthday: "To dearest Marie, from her affectionate Aunt Elise"; and when she spoke to her she called her Mawrie. Her brothers and sisters, whenever they wanted to be aggravating, called her Toodles, but at times of common friendliness they called her Molly; and so did most other people, and so shall I, and so may you.

Molly and her brothers and sisters were taken care of by a young woman who was called a nursery-governess. I don't know why, for she did not nurse them, and she certainly did not govern them. In her last situation she had been called a lady-help. I don't know the why of that either. Her name was Simpshall, and she was always saying "Don't!" and "You mustn't do that!" and "Put that down directly!" and "I shall tell your mamma if you don't leave off." She never seemed to know what you ought to do, but only what you oughtn't.

One day the children had a grand battle with all the toy soldiers and the little brass cannons that shoot peas, and the other kind that shoot pink caps with "*Fortes Amorces*" on the box.

Bertie, who always liked to have everything as real as possible, did not like the soldiers to be standing on the bare, polished mahogany of the dining-table.

"It's not a bit like a field of glory," he said. And, indeed, it was not.

So he borrowed the big kitchen knifebox and went out and brought it in full of nice real clean mould out of the garden. Half-a-dozen knifeboxfuls were needed to cover the table. Then the children made forts and ditches, and brought in sprigs of geraniums and calceolaria and box and yew, and made trees and ambushes and hedges. It was a lovely battlefield, and would have melted the heart of anyone but a nursery-governess.

But she just said: "What a disgusting mess! How naughty you are!" and fetched a brush and swept the field of glory away into the dustpan. There was only just time to save the lives of the soldiers.

And then Cecily put the knifebox back

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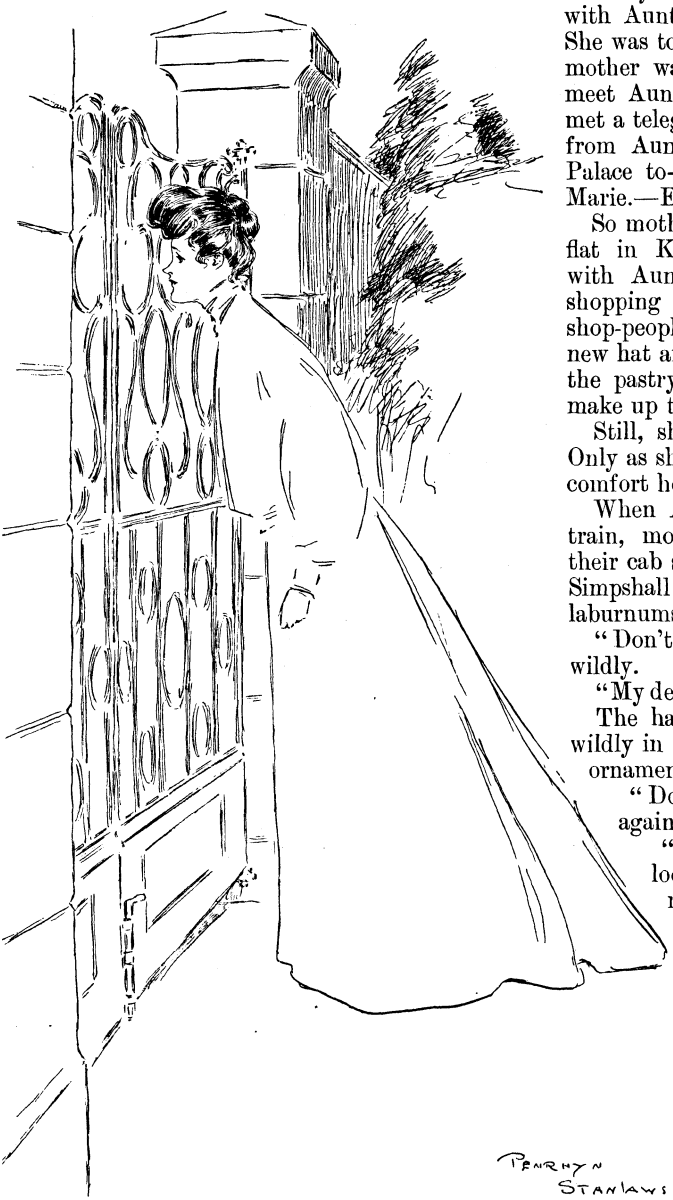
without saying what it had been used for, and the knives were put into it, so that at dinner everything tasted of earth, and the grit got between the people's teeth, so that



"'Don't come in! You shan't, you mustn't!'"

they could not eat their mutton or potatoes or cabbage, or even their gravy.

This, of course, was entirely Miss Simpshall's fault. If she had not behaved as she did, Bertie or Eva would have remembered to clean out the knifebox. As it was, the story of the field of glory came out over the gritty mutton and things, and father sent all the battlefield-makers to bed.

Molly was out of this. She was staying with Aunt Eliza, who was kind if refined. She was to come back the next day. But as mother was on her way to the station to meet Aunt Maria for a day's shopping, she met a telegraph-boy who gave her a telegram from Aunt Eliza, saying: "Am going to Palace to-day instead of to-morrow. Fetch Marie.—ELISE."

So mother fetched her from Aunt Eliza's flat in Kensington and took her shopping with Aunt Maria. There were hours of shopping in hot, stuffy shops full of tired shop-people and angry ladies, and even the new hat and jacket, and the strawberry-ice at the pastrycook's in Oxford Street, did not make up to Molly for that tiresome day.

Still, she was out of the battlefield row. Only as she did not know that, it could not comfort her.

When Aunt Maria had been put into her train, mother and Molly went home. As their cab stopped in front of the house, Miss Simpshall rushed out between the two dusty laburnums by the gate.

"Don't come in!" said Miss Simpshall wildly.

"My dear Miss Simpshall——" said mother.

The hair of the nursery-governess waved wildly in the evening breeze. She shut the ornamental iron gate in mother's face.

"Don't come in!" said Miss Simpshall again. "You shan't, you mustn't!"

"Don't talk nonsense," said mother, looking very white. "Have you gone mad?"

Miss Simpshall said she hadn't.

"But what's the matter?" said mother.

"Measles," said Miss Simpshall. "It's all out on them. Thick."

"Good gracious!" said mother.

"And I thought you'd perhaps just as soon Molly didn't have it, Mrs. Carruthers. And this is all the thanks I get—being told I'm insane."

"I'm sorry," said mother absently. "Yes, you were quite right. Keep the children warm. Has the doctor seen them?"

"Not yet. I've only just found it out. Oh, it's terrible. Their hands and faces are all scarlet with purple spots."

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"Oh, dear! oh, dear! I hope it's nothing worse than measles. I'll call in and send the doctor," said mother. "I shall be home by the last train. It's a blessing Molly's clothes are all here in her box."

So Molly was whisked off in the cab.

"I must take you back to your aunt's," said mother.

"But Aunt Eliza's gone to stay at the Bishop's Palace," said Molly.

"So she has. We must go to your Aunt Maria's. Oh, dear!"

"Never mind, mother," said Molly, slipping her hand into mother's, "perhaps they won't have it very badly. And I'll be very good, and try not to have it at all."

This was very brave of Molly: she would much rather have had measles than have gone to stay at Aunt Maria's.

Aunt Maria lived in a lovely old house down in Kent. It had beautiful furniture and lovely gardens; in fact, as Bertie said, it was a place

> Where every prospect pleases,
> And only aunt is vile.

Molly and her mother arrived there just at supper-time.

Aunt Maria was very surprised and displeased. Molly went to bed at once, and her supper was brought up on a tray by Clements, aunt's own maid. It was cold lamb and mint-sauce, and jelly and custard.

"Your aunt said I was to bring you biscuits and milk," said Clements, "but I thought you'd like this better."

"You're a darling," said Molly. "I was so afraid you'd be gone for your holiday. It's not nearly so beastly when you're here."

Clements was flattered and returned the compliment.

"And you aren't so bad when you're good, miss," she said. "Eat it up. I'll come back and bring you a night-light by and by."

One thing Molly liked about Aunt Maria's was that there were no children's bedrooms—no bare rooms with painted furniture and Dutch drugget. All the rooms were "best rooms," with soft carpets and beautiful old furniture. The beds were all four-posters, with carved pillars and silk damask curtains, and there were sure to be the loveliest things to make-believe with, in whatever room you happened to be put into. In this room there were cases of stuffed birds, with a stuffed pike that was just like life. There was a wonderful old cabinet, black and red and gold, very mysterious, and oak chests, and two fat, white Indian idols sitting cross-legged on the mantelpiece. It was very delightful. But Molly liked it best in the daytime. And she was glad of the night-light.

She thought of Bertie and Cecily and Eva and Baby and Vincent, and wondered whether measles hurt much.

Next day Aunt Maria was quite bearable. The worst thing she said was about people coming when they weren't expected and upsetting everything.

"I'll try not to upset anything," said Molly, and went out and got the gardener to put up a swing for her. Then she upset herself out of it, and got a bump on her forehead the size of a hen's egg, and that, as Aunt Maria very properly said, kept her out of mischief for the rest of the day.

Next morning Molly had two letters. The first was from Bertie. It said—

"DEAR MOLLY,—

"It is rough lines on you, but we did not mean to keep it up, and it is your fault for coming home the day before you ought to have. We did it to kid old Simpshall, because she was so beastly about us making a real battlefield. We only painted all the parts of us that show with vermilion, and put spots, mixed crimson lake and Prussian blue, all over. And we pulled down the blinds and said our heads ached—and so they did with crying. I mean the girls cried. She was afraid to come near us. But she was sorry she had been such a beast. And when she had come to the door, and said so through the keyhole, we owned up; but you had gone by then. It was a rare lark. But we've got three days bedder for it. I shall lower this on the end of a fishing-line to the baker's boy, and he will post it. It is like a dungeon. He is going to bring us tarts, like a faithful page.

"Your affectionate Bro.,

"BERTRAND DE LISLE CARRUTHERS."

The other letter was from mother.

"MY DARLING MOLLY,—

"It was all a naughty hoax, intended to annoy poor Miss Simpshall. Your brothers and sisters had painted their faces red and purple; they had not measles at all. But since you *are* at Aunt Maria's, I think you may as well stay——"

"How awful!" said Molly. "It is *too* bad!"

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"Molly wrote a nice little letter to her mother."

"—stay and make your annual visit. Be a good girl, dear, and do not forget to wear your pinafores in the morning.

"YOUR LOVING MOTHER."

Molly wrote a nice little letter to her mother. To her brother she said—

"DEAR BERTIE,—

"I think you are beasts to have let me in for this; you might have thought of me. I shall not forgive you till the sun is just going down, and I would not then, only it is so wrong not to. I wish *you* had been named Maria, and had to stay here instead of me. "Your broken-hearted sister,

"MOLLY CARRUTHERS."

When Molly stayed at the White House, she was accustomed to read aloud in the mornings from "Ministering Children" or "Little Pilgrims" while Aunt Maria sewed severely. But that morning Aunt Maria did not send for her.

"Your aunt's not well," Clements told her; "she won't be down before lunch. Run along, do, miss, and walk in the garden like a young lady."

Molly chose rather to go out into the stableyard like a young gentleman. The groom was saddling the sorrel horse.

"I've got to take a telegram to the station," said he.

"Take me," said Molly.

"Likely! And what 'ud your aunt say?"

"She won't know," said Molly; "and if she does, I'll say I made you."

He laughed, and Molly had a splendid ride behind the groom, with her arms so

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tight round his waistcoat that he could hardly breathe.

When they got to the station, a porter lifted her down, and the groom let her send off the telegram. It was to Uncle Toodlethwaite, and it said—

"Please come down at once. Urgent business. Most important. Don't fail. Bring Bates. "MARIA CARRUTHERS."

So Molly knew something very out-of-the-way had happened, and she was glad that her aunt should have something to think of besides her, because the White House would have been a very nice place to stay at if Aunt Maria had not so often remembered to do her duty by her.

In the afternoon Uncle Toodlethwaite came, and he and Aunt Maria and a person in black, with a shining black bag—Molly supposed he was Mr. Bates, who was to be brought by Uncle Toodlethwaite—sat in the dining-room with the door shut.

Molly went to help the kitchenmaid shell peas in the little grass courtyard in the middle of the house. They sat on the kitchen steps, and Molly could hear the voices of Clements and the housekeeper through the open window of the servants' hall. She heard, but she did not think it was eavesdropping or anything dishonourable, like listening at doors. They were talking quite out loud.

"And the dreadful blow it will be to us all, if true!" the housekeeper was saying.

"*She* thinks it's true," said Clements; "cried her eyes out, she did, and wired for her brother-in-law once removed."

"Meaning her brother's brother-in-law? I see. But I don't know as I really understand the ins and outs of it even yet."

"Well, it's like this," said Clements. "Missis an' her brother, they used to live here along of their uncle, and he had a son, a regular bad egg he was, and the old master said he shouldn't ever have a penny of his money. He said he'd leave it to Mr. Carruthers—that's missis's brother, see."

"That means father," thought Molly.

"And he'd leave missis the house and enough money to keep it up in style. He was a warm man, it seems. Well, then, the son's drowned at sea—ship went down and all aboard perished—just as well, because when the old man died they couldn't find no will. So it all comes to missis and her brother, there being no other relations near or far, and they divides it the same as the old man had always said he wished. You see what I mean?"

"Near enough," said the housekeeper. "And then?"

"Why, then," said Clements, "comes this letter, this very morning, from a lawyer, to say as this bad egg of a cousin wasn't drowned at all. He was in foreign parts, and only now heard of his father's decease, and intends without delay to claim the property, which all comes to him, the deceased having died insensate—that means without a will."

"I say, Clements," Molly sang out, "you must have read the letter. Did aunt show it to you?"

There was a dead silence. The kitchenmaid giggled. Someone whispered inside the room. Then the housekeeper's voice called softly—

"Come in here a minute, miss," and the window was sharply shut.

Molly emptied the peascods out of her pinafore and went in.

Directly she was inside the door Clements caught her by the arm and shook her.

"You nasty, mean, prying little cat!" she said, "and me getting you jelly and custard, and I don't know what all!"

"I'm not," said Molly. "Don't, Clements! you hurt."

"You deserve me to," was the reply. "Doesn't she, Mrs. Williams?"

"Don't you know it's wrong to listen?" asked Mrs. Williams.

"I didn't listen," said Molly indignantly. "You were simply shouting. No one could help hearing. Me and Jane would have had to put our fingers in our ears *not* to hear."

"I didn't think it of you," said Clements, beginning to sniff.

"I don't know what you're making all this fuss about," said Molly; "I'm not a sneak."

"Have a piece of cake, miss," said Mrs. Williams, "and give me your word it shan't go any further."

"I don't want your cake. You'd better give it to Clements. It's she that tells things, not me."

Molly began to cry.

"There, I declare, miss, I'm sorry I shook you, but I was that put out. There, I ask your pardon. I can't do more. You wouldn't get poor Clements into trouble, I'm sure."

"Of course I wouldn't. You might have known that."

Well, peace was restored. But Molly wouldn't have the cake.

That evening Jane wore a new silver

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"Molly embraced the tall, gaunt figure."

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brooch shaped like a horseshoe with an arrow through it.

It was after tea, when Uncle Toodlethwaite was gone, that Molly, creeping quietly out to see the pigs fed, came upon her aunt at the end of the hollyhock walk. Her aunt was sitting on the rustic seat that the crimson rambler makes an arbour over. Her handkerchief was held to her face with both hands, and her thin shoulders were shaking with sobs.

And at once Molly forgot how disagreeable Aunt Maria had always been, and how she hated her. She ran to her aunt and threw her arms round her neck. Aunt Maria jumped in her seat, but she let the arms stay where they were, though they made it quite difficult for her to use her handkerchief.

"Don't cry, dear ducky *darling* Aunt Maria," said Molly. "Oh, don't. What *is* the matter?"

"Nothing you would understand," said Aunt Maria gruffly. "Run away and play, there's a good child."

"But I don't want to play while you're crying. I'm sure I could understand, dear little auntie." Molly embraced the tall, gaunt figure.

"Dear little auntie, tell Molly!" She used just the tone she was accustomed to use to her baby brother.

"It's—it's business," said Aunt Maria, sniffing.

"I know business is dreadfully bad. Father says so," said Molly. "Don't send me away, auntie. I'll be as quiet as a mouse. I'll just sit and cuddle you till you feel better."

She got her arms round her aunt's waist, and snuggled her head against a thin arm. Aunt Maria had always been one for keeping children in their proper places. Yet somehow now Molly's proper place seemed to be just where she was—where she had never been before.

"You're a kind little girl, Maria," she said presently.

"I wish I could do something," said Molly. "Wouldn't you feel better if you told me? They say it does you good not to grieve in solitary concealment. I'm sure I could understand if you didn't use long words."

And, curiously enough, Aunt Maria did tell her, almost exactly what she had heard from Clements.

"And I know there was a will leaving it all to your father and me," she said. "I saw it signed. It was witnessed by the butler we had then—he died the year after—and by Mr. Sheldon—he died too, out hunting."

Her voice softened, and Molly snuggled closer and said: "Poor Mr. Sheldon!"

"He and I were to have been married," said Aunt Maria suddenly. "That's his picture in the hall, between the carp and your Great-uncle Carruthers."

"Poor auntie!" said Molly, thinking of the handsome man in scarlet next the stuffed carp. "Oh, poor auntie, I do love you so!"

Aunt Maria put an arm around her.

"Oh, my dear," she said, "you don't understand. All the happy things that ever happened to me happened here, and all the sad things too. If they turn me out, I shall die. I know I shall. It's been bad enough," she went on more to herself than to Molly, "but there's always been the place, just as it was when I was a girl, when he used to come here, so bold and laughing he always was. I can see him here, quite plainly. I've only to shut my eyes. But I couldn't see him anywhere else."

"Don't wills get hidden away sometimes?" Molly asked, for she had read stories about such things.

"We looked everywhere," said Aunt Maria, "everywhere. We had detectives from London, because there were things he'd left to other people, and we wanted to carry out his wishes; but we couldn't find it. Uncle must have destroyed it and meant to make another. Only he never did, he never did. Oh, I hope the dead can't see what we suffer. If my Uncle Carruthers and dear James could see me turned out of the old place, it would break their hearts even up in heaven."

Molly was silent.

Suddenly her aunt seemed to awake from a dream.

"Good gracious, child," she said, "what nonsense I've been talking! Go away and play and forget all about it. Your own troubles will begin soon enough."

"I do love you, auntie," said Molly, and went.

Aunt Maria never unbent again as she had done that evening. But Molly felt a difference that made all the difference. She was not afraid of her aunt now, and she loved her. Besides, things were happening. The White House was now the most interesting place in the world.

Be sure that Molly set to work at once to look for the missing will. London detectives were very careless, she was certain they were. She opened drawers and felt in the backs of cupboards. She prodded the padding of

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chairs, listening for the crackling of paper inside among the stuffing. She tapped the woodwork of the house all over for secret panels. But she did not find the will.

She could not believe that her Great-uncle Carruthers would have been so silly as to burn a will that he knew might be wanted at any moment. She used to stand in front of his portrait and look at it. He did not look at all silly. And she used to look at the portrait of handsome, laughing Mr. Sheldon, who had been killed out hunting instead of marrying Aunt Maria, and more than once she said—

"You might tell me where it is. You look as if you knew."

But he never altered his jolly smile.

Molly thought of missing wills from the moment her eyes opened in the morning to the time when they closed at night.

Then came the dreadful day when Uncle Toodlethwaite and Mr. Bates came down, and Uncle Toodlethwaite said—

"I'm afraid there's no help for it, Maria. You can delay the thing a bit, but you'll have to turn out in the end."

It was on that night that the wonderful thing happened—the thing that Molly has never told to anyone except me, because she thought no one could believe it.

She went to bed as usual and to sleep—and she woke suddenly, hearing someone call "Molly, Molly!"

She sat up in bed The room was full of moonlight. As usual, her first waking thought was of the missing will. Had it been found? Was her aunt calling her to tell the good news? No, the room was quite still. She was alone.

The moonlight fell full on the old black-and-red-and-gold cabinet. That, she had often thought, was just the place where a will would be hidden. It might have a secret drawer that the London detectives had missed. She had often looked over it carefully, but now she got out of bed and lighted her candle and went across to the cabinet to have one more look. She opened all the drawers, pressed all the knobs in the carved brasswork.

There was a little door in the middle. She knew that the little cupboard behind it was empty. It had red-lacquered walls, and the back wall was looking-glass. She opened the little cupboard, held up her candle, and looked in. She expected to see her own face in the glass as usual, but she did not see it. Instead there was a black space, the opening to something not quite black. She could see lights—candle-lights. And the space grew bigger, or she grew smaller. She never knew which. And next moment she was walking through the opening.

"Now I am going to see something really worth seeing," said Molly.

She was not frightened. From first to last she was not at all frightened.

She walked straight through the back of the cabinet in the best bedroom upstairs into the library on the ground-floor. That sounds like nonsense, but Molly declares it was so.

There were candles on the table, and papers. And there were people in the library. They did not see her.

There was Great-uncle Carruthers and Aunt Maria, very pretty with long curls and a striped grey silk dress, like in the picture in the drawing-room. There was handsome, jolly Mr. Sheldon in a brown coat. An old servant was just going out of the door.

"That's settled, then," said Great-uncle Carruthers. "Now, my girl, bed."

Aunt Maria—such a young, pretty Aunt Maria—Molly would never have known her but for the portrait—kissed her uncle, and then she took a Christmas rose out of her dress and put it in Mr. Sheldon's button-hole, and put up her face to him and said: "Good-night, James." He kissed her—Molly heard the loud, jolly sound of the kiss—and Aunt Maria went away.

Then the old man said—

"You'll leave this at Bates' for me, Sheldon; you're safer than the post."

Handsome Mr. Sheldon said he would.

Then the lights went out, and Molly was in bed again.

Quite suddenly it was daylight. Jolly Mr. Sheldon, in his red coat, was standing by the cabinet. The little cupboard door was open.

"By George!" he said, "it's ten days since I promised to take that will up to Bates, and I never gave it another thought. All your fault, Maria, my dear. You shouldn't take up all my thoughts. I'll take it to-morrow."

Molly heard something click, and he went out of the room whistling.

Molly lay still. She felt there was more to come. And the next thing was that she was looking out of window, and saw something carried across the lawn on a hurdle with two scarlet coats laid over it, and she knew it was handsome Mr. Sheldon, and that he would not carry the will to Bates to-morrow, nor do anything else in this world ever any more.

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"It fell into brown dust in her hands."

When Molly woke in the morning, she sprang out of bed and ran to the cabinet.

There was nothing in the looking-glass cupboard.

All the same, she ran straight to her aunt's room. It was long before the hour when Clements soberly tapped, bringing hot water.

"Wake up, auntie," she said; "I'm certain there's a secret place in that cabinet in my room, and the will's in it. I know it is."

"You've been dreaming," said Aunt Maria severely. "Go back to bed. You'll catch your death of cold, paddling about barefoot like that."

Molly had to go.

But after breakfast she began again.

"But why do you think so?" asked Aunt Maria.

And Molly, who thought she knew that nobody would believe her story, could only say—

"I don't know; but I'm quite sure——"

"Nonsense!" said Aunt Maria.

"Auntie," Molly said, "don't you think that uncle might have given the will to Mr. Sheldon to take to Mr. Bates, and he may have put it in the secret place and forgotten?"

"What a head the child's got, full of fancies!" said Aunt Maria.

"If he slept in that room—— Did he ever sleep in that room?"

"Always, whenever he stayed here."

"Was it long after the will signing that poor Mr. Sheldon died?"

"Ten days," said Aunt Maria shortly. "Run away and play; I've letters to write."

But, because it seemed good to leave no stone unturned, one of those letters was to a cabinet-maker in Rochester; and the groom took it in the dog-cart, and the cabinet-maker came back with him.

And there *was* a secret hiding-place behind the looking-glass in the little red-lacquered cupboard in the old black-and-red-and-gold cabinet; and in that secret hiding-place was the missing will, and on it lay a brown flower that dropped to dust when it was moved.

"It's a Christmas rose," said Molly.

* * * * *

"So you see really it was a very good thing the others pretended to have measles, because if they hadn't, I shouldn't have come to you; and if I hadn't come, I shouldn't have known there was a will missing; and if I hadn't known that, I shouldn't have found it, should I, auntie? should I, uncle?" said Molly, wild with delight.

"No, dear," said Aunt Maria, patting her hand.

"Little girls," said Uncle Toodlethwaite, "should be seen and not heard. But I admit that simulated measles may sometimes be a blessing in disguise."

All the young Carruthers thought so when they got the five pounds that Aunt Maria sent them; and so did Miss Simpshall, because it was owing to her that Molly was taken to the White House that day. Molly got a little pearl necklace as well as five pounds.

"Mr. Sheldon gave it to me," said Aunt Maria. "I wouldn't give it to anyone but you."

Molly hugged her in silent rapture.

That just shows how different our Aunt Marias would prove if they would only let us know them as they really are. It really is not wise to conceal everything from children.

You see, if Aunt Maria had not told Molly about Mr. Sheldon, she would never have thought about him enough to see his ghost. Now Molly is grown up, she tells me it was only a dream; but even if it was, it is just as wonderful, and served the purpose just as well.

Perhaps you would like to know what Aunt Maria said when the cabinet-maker opened the secret hiding-place, and she saw the paper with the brown Christmas rose on it? Clements was there, as well as the cabinet-maker and Molly. She said right out before them all—

"Oh, James, my dear!" And she picked up the flower before she opened the will; and it fell into brown dust in her hands.

THE SHEEP-BELL.

NO bird sings near, no bee about me hums,
Veiled is the valley, silent runs the rill,
One white star stares, while solemn music comes—
The sheep-bell tinkling on the shadowy hill.

Tired Nature's little angelus art thou,
At whose blest tones the blossoms in the dell
Bend, and the weary trees through every bough
Thrill, where I listing stand, entrancing bell!

CHARLES INNISS BOWEN.

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THE TALE OF THE TINY HOUSE

BY

ETHEL TURNER

'TWAS in a corner of a room
That no one cared to use
That I found one day, very hard at play,
Little Miss Socks-and-Shoes.

Her hair was golden, her eyes were bright,
And chubby and pink was she,
And I heard this mite very loud recite,
Though a trifle tearfully—

"Oh! I am a cook and a housemaid trim,
And the lady who comes to call,
And the little Boy Blue, and the daughter too,
And the mother who smacks us all."

And she jumped about and she waved her arms,
Till I really felt afraid
Lest housekeeping strain had turned her brain;
And so I simply said:

"Oh, Socks-and-Shoes, it's little I know
Of the cares of the nursery,
But I'll eat my hand if I understand
How ever you can be—

"At once a cook and a housemaid trim,
And a lady who comes to call,
And a little Boy Blue, and a daughter too,
And the mother who smacks you all."

Then she gave a hitch to her little sock, which
Had travelled into her shoe,
And climbed my knee and most sorrowfully
Told me how it came true.

"Twas father," she said, "who gave them to me,
He bought them in Paris last year;
There were six in a row, made of sugar, you know,
And they lived in my doll's house, here.

"Each so smiling and sweet, with its pinky cheeks,
Blue eyes, and tiny waist,
I told them each day that I'd starve away
Before I'd as much as taste.

"So one was the cook and one the maid,
One a lady who came to call,
I'd a little Boy Blue, and a daughter too,
And a mother to smack them all.

"Then she gave a hitch to her little sock."

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"And for months I played with the
darling things,
And never took even a bite;
Then brother Jack from his school came
back
And looked at the dears with delight.

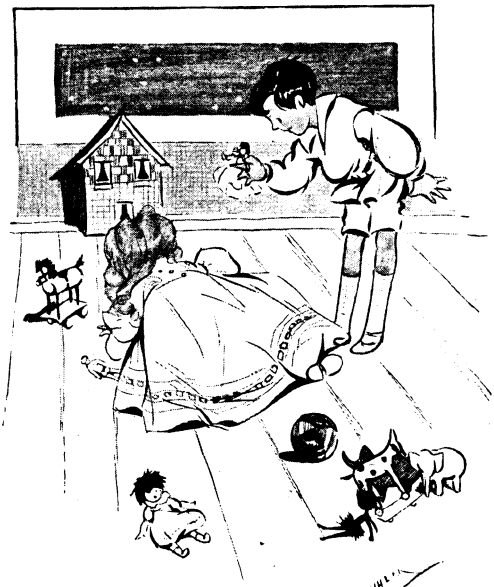
"'What luck!' he exclaimed, and bit the
cook's leg,
And licked her head, loud and long,
'Just try her,' said he, and he gave her
to me—
I licked, though I knew it was wrong.

"'What luck!' he exclaimed, and bit the cook's leg."

"Then he fastened his eyes on the
housemaid trim,
'A real little duck!' he cried,
And her cap he ate, which was chocolate.
I ate her arms, but I sighed.

"And then we began to lick Boy Blue;
He tasted like almond rock.
And the girl was a dream of vanilla
cream.
I ate, but it gave me a shock.

"I had never yet disagreed with her,
And tender and true was she;
But I'd eaten her now, and you don't
know how
She disagreed with me.



"And her cap he ate."

"You don't know how she disagreed with me."

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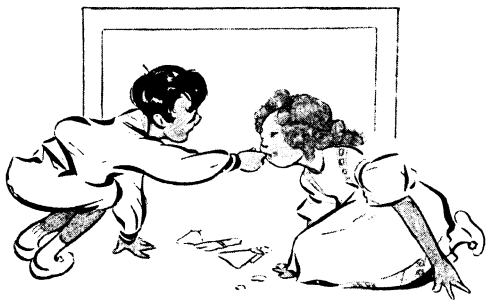


"I felt it was true, and I took my half."

"And then we disposed—I shed one tear—
Of the lady who came to call;
She was hollow inside, and, worse beside,
Her bonnet was bitter as gall.

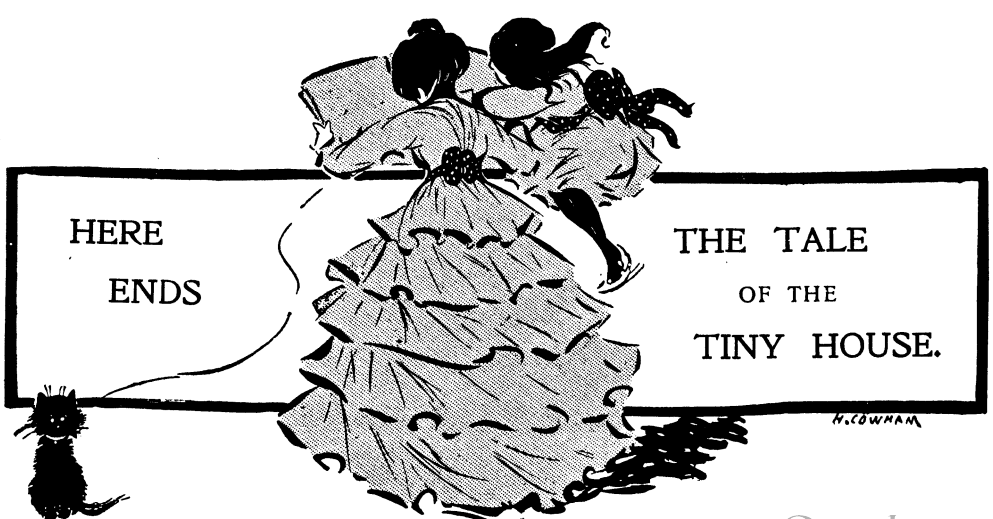
"Then only the mother was left at last,
Of all of her gentle race;
The house where she sate was desolate,
I could not look in her face.

"For I loved that mother as well as my own,
And I said as much to Jack;
But he grinned and said: 'She is better dead,
Now there's no one left to smack.'

"I felt it was true, and I took my half,
And I went away and hid;
When her bonnet-wreath crunched in my teeth,
I choked with tears, I did.

"Yet I sometimes laugh, and I sometimes smile,
And I still come here to play;
And I tell Jack's joke, though my heart is broke—
Jack's joke, which is to say:

"Oh, I am the cook and the housemaid trim,
And the lady who comes to call,
And the little Boy Blue, and the daughter too,
And the mother who smacks them all."



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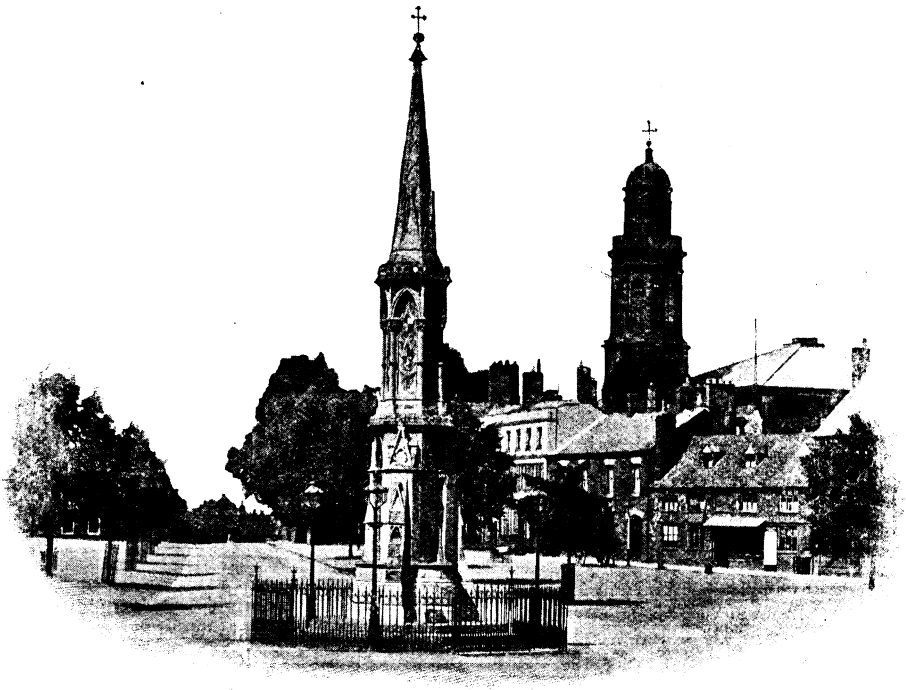

Photo by | | *Taunt, Oxford.*

BANBURY CROSS.

LOCALISED EATABLES.

By Leonard W. Lillingston.

LIVES there man or woman who has not fallen a victim to the fascinations of the Banbury cake? When stranded at the lonely junction waiting for a train, how often has one flown to the Banbury for consolation! Banbury town was famous for its cakes in Ben Jonson's time. He introduces a Banbury cake-maker in his "Bartholemew Fair." It appears that such was his zeal in giving his customers value for their money that he ruined a grocer "in Newgate Market . . . . who trusted him with currants." Banbury was as celebrated for its zeal as for its cakes. Was it not a Banbury Puritan who hanged his cat on a Monday "for killing a mouse of a Sunday"? The tragedy is perpetuated in the trade-mark of one cake-maker; another has laid the famous Banbury Cross under contribution.

At "The Original Cake Shop" the cakes have been made and sold since 1638. This shop was kept for many years by the famous Betty White. She was a woman of character. "My name is Quiet Betty," she would say. "I never meddles nor makes with nobody; no mealman ever calls upon me twice." Old Jarvis White, Betty's husband, is said to have spent most of his time hanging over the hatch of his shop-door, while Betty was at work within. He was, however, proud of his wife's cakes. He was wont to assert, in proof of their lightness, that a sparrow came into the shop one day and flew off with one. There are descendants of Betty White still engaged in the cake-making, though they have removed from the old shop. The visitor to Banbury is divided between the claims of these descendants who hold the "original recipe," and the attractions of the "Original Cake Shop." The best way is to compound the matter and try them both.

The composition of the cakes has not changed for certainly two centuries. More than fifty years ago one Banbury cake-maker estimated his annual sales at 139,500 of the twopenny cakes alone. The output for the whole town must be very considerable, though in point of numbers the Banbury is

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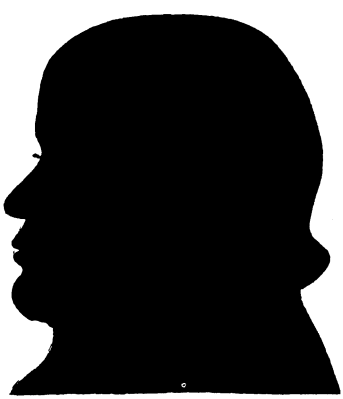
beaten by the Eccles cake. But then the genuine Banbury costs twopence, the Eccles cake only a penny.

Eccles town, where "the only genuine" cakes are made, is not far from Manchester. The Eccles cake resembles the Banbury in flavour and composition. But the former is round, whilst the latter is an irregular oval. All Eccles is divided into two factions, for there are two "original" cake-makers. The one declares himself to be "The Old-Established Eccles Cake Maker, Never Removed," the other "The Old-Established Eccles Cake Maker, Removed from the Opposite Side." There is a third shop, known as "Ye Olde Thatch," which claims to have been built as far back as the eleventh century.

Formerly the Eccles cake was made specially for the Eccles Wakes. Every Lancashire town has its Wakes week or annual holiday. No doubt large quantities of the cakes are still consumed during the wake, but they are now made and sold all the year round. The business of the cake-maker "Removed from the Opposite Side" came under the hammer a few years ago. The auctioneer stated that the average output of cakes was not less than 2,500 dozen a week. The "Old Original, Never Removed," on the other hand, has declared that he can turn out 9,000 cakes in a day. The consumption of these cakes must be enormous, for they are made by every confectioner in Lancashire, and in Cheshire, Yorkshire, and other counties besides.



"OLD JARVIS WHITE," HUSBAND OF THE CELEBRATED BETTY WHITE, THE BANBURY CAKE-MAKER.

From a silhouette dated 1778. *Ancestor of the Betts Family.*

The discovery of gingerbread, like that of many another beneficent invention, came about by chance. A worthy knight, returning from a jovial bout, found his lady kneading dough. Being somewhat choleric in his cups, he lifted his mailed toe, and over went the vessel containing the mixture. Near it stood a pot of treacle and a box of ginger. The contents were upset into the dough, and, behold! gingerbread had been discovered.

As the art of gingerbread-making developed, the product improved. It was reserved for the little town of Ormskirk, near Liverpool, to bring it to a pitch of perfection previously unknown. It was doubtless the Ormskirk variety of which Costard was thinking when he said: "An I had but one penny in the world, thou shouldst have it to buy gingerbread."

BETTY WHITE, OF BANBURY CAKE FAME.

Ormskirk gingerbread is commonly sold, not in the oblong cakes affected by the confectioners of other towns, but in the form of light, crisp biscuits of a golden brown. It has a highly characteristic flavour of its own. When Ormskirk Fair, once a year, draws visitors from all parts of Lancashire, the gingerbread appears in the shape of horses, dogs, cats, pigs, and other domestic animals calculated to appeal to the juvenile mind. Large quantities of it are sent to the Welsh watering-places and to the Isle of Man during the season. A traveller who visited Ormskirk a hundred years ago says that the appeal, "Buy my fine Ormskirk gingerbread!" was impossible to be resisted, backed as it was by the appealing glances of the young women who offered it. He adds that they came nearer the idea he had formed of Lancashire witches than any of the sex he had before seen north of the Mersey. Many a town of greater size would be more than satisfied to be the source of the finest gingerbread in the world. Not so Ormskirk. Its parish church is unique among parish churches. For it has both tower and spire, standing side by side. Tradition tells that two ancient spinsters determined to give Ormskirk a church. One wanted a spire, the other a tower. As neither would give way, the church was built with both. Ormskirk was also formerly celebrated for the "Ormskirk Medicine," an infallible cure for hydrophobia!

For many years the fond relatives of Bedreddin Hassan sought him in vain. I have always thought the story of how they discovered him to be one of the most wonderful pieces of philosophic insight in that wonderful compendium of philosophy, "The Arabian Nights." Not by means of the "agony column," nor by the aid of a private inquiry agency, was Bedreddin discovered,

but simply by the purchase of a cream-tart. His mother, we are told, snatching it greedily, broke a piece off, but no sooner put it to her mouth than she cried out and swooned away. "It must needs be my son, my dear Bedreddin, that made this tart!" cried she, as she came to herself. For the cream-tart of a man of talent has character and individuality denied to every other form of known confectionery—except the cheese-cake. The cheese-cake belongs to the same family. Who that has ever eaten a "Maid of Honour," for example, could ever forget the flavour?

THE ORIGINAL CAKE-SHOP, BANBURY.

The beginnings of the Richmond Maid of Honour are a little uncertain. Some say that Henry the Eighth gave them the name. The King was making a royal progress to Reading. Anne Boleyn, then a Maid of Honour, sat eating some cheese-cakes with the other young ladies. The King, probably after trying a cheese-cake himself, inquired with enthusiasm what special variety they might be. Anne Boleyn was at a loss for an answer. "Let them be called 'Maids of Honour,'" said he. Tradition then skips a trifle of three centuries, and alleges that George the Second or George the Third—it is not quite certain which—christened them so because they were introduced to the royal table by a Maid of Honour. At any rate, George the Third had them supplied to his palaces at Richmond, Kew, and Hampton.

There is no mention of an "Old Original" Maid of Honour shop in the reign of Henry the Eighth. The inference is that the cheese-cakes were made by the maids themselves. For the original recipe is said to have been kept in an iron chest given by the King to Anne Boleyn. But there is an "Original Shop" at Richmond, and only one. It stands on the site of the one given in our illustration; and the cakes, if not made from the recipe of Anne Boleyn, are made from one which, it is said, cost the grandfather of the present proprietor £1,000.

There is no doubt that the Chelsea bun has gone out of fashion. Though the muffin-man has survived the march of the centuries, the Chelsea bun-seller has vanished. His melodious voice is silent:

> "One a penny, two a penny, hot Chelsea buns,
> Burning hot! Smoking hot! R-r-reeking hot!
> Hot Chelsea buns!"

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Some attribute the decline of the Chelsea

Photo by] [*Whaley, Doncaster.*

A BUTTER-SCOTCH CENTRE AT DONCASTER.

bun to the fact that it was spiced, and that spiced buns are no longer popular. Others assert that it was driven from the field by the superior attractions of the Bath bun. The Old Chelsea Bun House stood where is now Pimlico Road ; George the Second and Queen Caroline, George the Third and his Queen and their children, were frequent visitors to the Bun House. Queen Charlotte presented Mrs. Hand, the proprietress, with a silver half-gallon mug with five guineas in it. The Bun House was to be seen at its best on Good Friday morning. Fifty thousand persons are said to have been present one Good Friday, and upwards of two hundred and fifty pounds were taken. Unhappily, however, there were those who went, not to indulge in the innocent pleasure of eating buns, but to satisfy a taste for horse-play and disorder. As a consequence Mrs. Hand was driven to post a notice that she would not in future sell her buns on Good Friday "to any person whatsoever." However, the Bun House remained a place of fashionable resort for many years after. It was much frequented when Ranelagh Gardens, near by, were in their prime. It was a bun-shop and something of a museum as well. It contained a collection of pictures, models, grotesque figures, and antiques. The Chelsea bun, it is said, "afforded a competency to four generations of the same family." They seem to have deserved it. Even that old cynic, Swift, speaks of the "rare Chelsea bun." Though the Chelsea bun cannot compete with its modern rivals, it has still many admirers. The original recipe used at the Old Chelsea Bun House is now in the possession of a well-known firm of refreshment contractors, and they sell many thousands weekly.

Most famous buns have a history ; the Bath bun has none. It won its way silently and unobtrusively. The composition of it is an open secret ; there is no original recipe and, strictly speaking, no original shop. It is made of flour, eggs, butter, sugar, and lemon. Yet, though the ordinary Bath bun is good, the true Bath bun is infinitely better. It is not sold out of Bath. It is no exception to the rule that joys are fleeting ; it should be eaten on the day it is baked. Thousands of these buns are sent out of Bath at Christmas time to distant friends.

The fame of the Bath Oliver rivals that of the Bath bun. The Oliver is a biscuit, and was in existence when the Abernethy and the Captain were the only other biscuits sold. Like the Abernethy, it was invented by a famous doctor. Dr. Oliver, the friend of Pope and of Warburton, was physician to the Bath Mineral Water Hospital. Pope esteemed him highly ; we find him writing the doctor regarding the material for the famous grotto at his villa at Twickenham. Upon the death of the doctor's parents the poet wrote their epitaphs. Dr. Oliver invented the biscuit for the use of his patients. As he lay dying he called to his bedside a favourite coachman. "My good Atkins," said he, "I wish to put you into a position to obtain a livelihood when I am gone. I give you the recipe to make my biscuits ; I give you a supply of ten sacks of finest wheaten flour and one hundred pounds in

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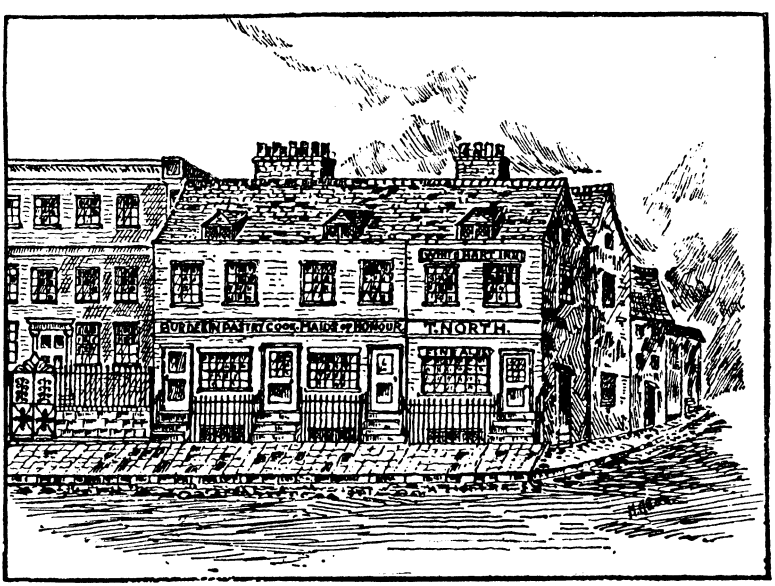
money." The "good Atkins" established himself in a small shop in Green Street, Bath, where the Oliver has been sold ever since. He left a large fortune to his children when he died.

The fame of the Bath Oliver since then has spread far and wide. The shop has been supplemented by a factory turning out seventy thousand biscuits a day. Lord Roberts, when he started for the Cape, took some Bath Olivers with him. They were imported, borne on the shoulders of natives, six hundred miles inland from the coast of Africa. The Oliver is esteemed especially good with cheese or butter. It is primarily designed for those afflicted by the "accursed hag, Dyspepsia," but many people eat it because they like it. And a very good reason, too.

SHREWSBURY CAKE-SHOP.

In the battle of the buns, Bath is said to have beaten Chelsea. But amongst the cakes the Simnel is, and always has been, without a rival. The Simnel is made at many places—at Shrewsbury, Devizes, and at Banbury; but the town famous above all others for the Simnel is Bury.



THE HOME OF THE "MAIDS OF HONOUR" AT RICHMOND.
Original lent by Mr. Billet, Hill Street, Richmond.

Mid Lenten faste yt
makes ryche feaste
For olde and younge,
lytelle and leaste,
For waterynge mouths
sure ne'er have ceaste
For "The Goode Olde
Burye Symnelle."

Thousands of people flock into Bury on Mid-Lent Sunday. They have come "a-mothering"—that is, to visit their parents and friends. This is accompanied by the consumption of Simnel cake and braget. Braget is a drink compounded of ale, whipped eggs, spice, and sugar. Hence in some

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parts of Lancashire the day is known as Braget Sunday. The housewives of Bury are on their mettle for weeks before the festival. There are Simnels to be made for those still beneath the old roof-tree, and Simnels to be sent to those far away. The cakes, too, are exposed for sale, not only in the shops, but even in the windows of private houses. They vary in price from two to twenty shillings apiece. They are circular in shape, and differ in size from two inches in diameter to several feet. As to the ingredients, the chief ones are dried fruits, spices, sugar, butter, and eggs. Formerly they were first boiled and then baked, but in Bury, at least, the boiling is now dispensed with.

By some the name of the cake is derived from Lambert Simnel, the son of a baker, and pretender to the throne of Henry VII.; but it is more likely that the pretender was named after the cake, than the cake after the pretender—for it was certainly made and eaten long before his time. Another authority suggests that it is the "banquet bread" of William the Conqueror—a dole issued by that amiable monarch to the monks.

The Shrewsbury cake must not be confounded with the Shrewsbury Simnel. The Shrewsbury cake is peculiar to the town. It is biscuit shaped, its flavour and crispness are alike indescribable. It has been referred to as a "kind of shortbread." This may have arisen from an allusion of Congreve's: "As short as a Shrewsbury cake." But though a cake may be short, that does not make shortbread of it. Shenstone expresses his deep gratitude to the inventor of the Shrewsbury cake.

> May flowers adorn his grave,
> Whose art did first these dulcet cakes display.

It was a pious wish, but the name of the inventor of the Shrewsbury cake is unknown. It was, however, the custom, as far back as the reign of Queen Elizabeth, to present them to distinguished persons visiting the town, just as in other places people are presented with the freedom of the city. When Queen Victoria, then the Princess Victoria, visited the town in 1832, she was presented by the Mayor with a box of Shrewsbury cakes. Though the genius who discovered them died, in all probability, "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung," a descendant or successor of his is mentioned by the author of the "Ingoldsby Legends."

> She has given him a roll and a bun,
> And a Shrewsbury cake of Pailin's own make,
> Which she happened to take, ere her run
> She begun.

Elsewhere the author of "Ingoldsby" refers to the Shrewsbury in terms calculated to make a modest confectioner blush. The great Pailin seems to have been in the Shrewsbury cake way from 1760 onwards. The

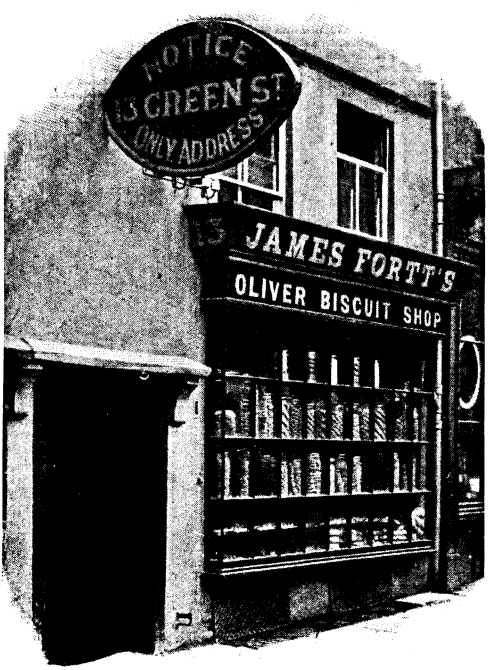

Photo by [A. F. Perren, Bath.

AN "OLIVER" SHOP.

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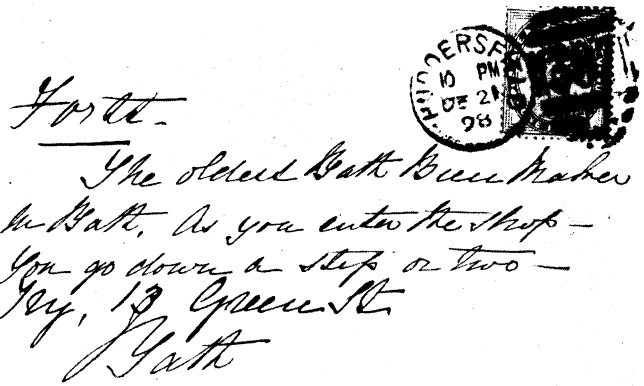
cakes are still made by his successor, from the original recipe, at "Ye Olde Cake-Shoppe."

A visit to Doncaster in race-week would lead one to believe that the chief object of visiting the town was not the races, but the consumption of butter-scotch. Everybody is eating it, and everywhere. The boys who sell it are ubiquitous; you meet them at the railway station, in the town, on the way to



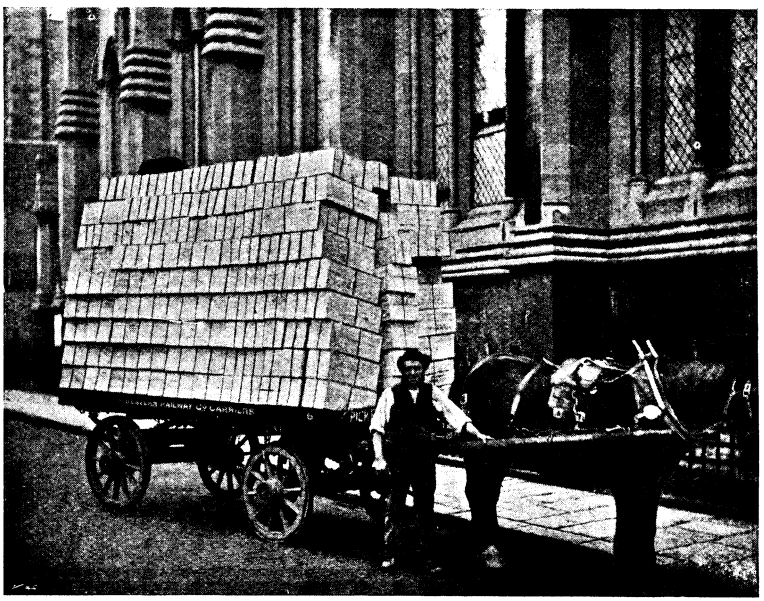


Photo by A. F. Perren, Bath.
WEIGHT, 3 TONS 4½ CWT. FIFTH CONSIGNMENT OF "ORIGINAL" BATH OLIVER BISCUITS SENT IN ONE WEEK TO LAZENBY, WHOLESALE AGENTS.

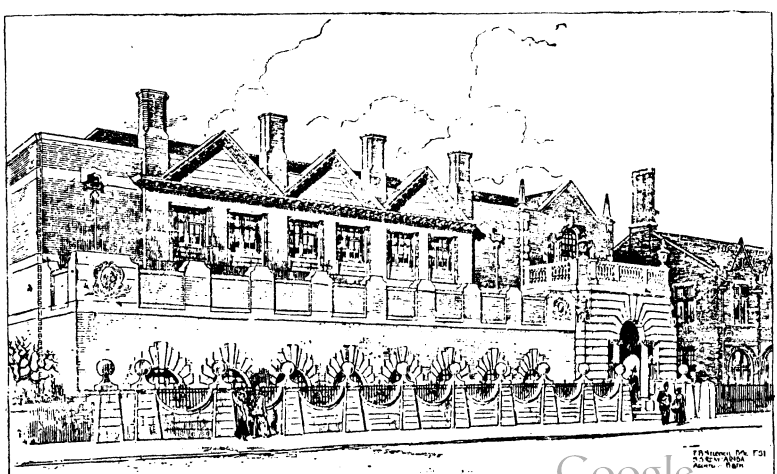
the course, on the course itself.

Doncaster butter-scotch was invented early in the nineteenth century. The shop in which the great discovery was made is still unaltered, with its quaint bow windows dating from

A DESCRIPTIVE ADDRESS.

the days when the visitor leaving Doncaster ate his butter-scotch seated on the roof of the "High-flyer" or the "Rattler."

Some of the old trays into which the butter-scotch was poured are still preserved. They measure about twelve inches by eight. Nowadays, steel slabs twenty-four feet long by three and a half feet wide have taken their place. A mahogany box about



"BATH OLIVER" HEADQUARTERS.

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twelve inches long by nine wide, and five feet deep, formerly held the entire week's output. Now in the busy season it would scarcely hold the output for two minutes of the day of eight and a half working hours. The amount produced every year against the race-week alone would form a stack 1,200 feet long, 850 feet wide, and 50 feet high.

That Caledonia, stern and wild, should be celebrated for its rocks is scarcely surprising. Edinburgh, Forfar, Glasgow, and Perth are all noted for this seductive sweetmeat. Edinburgh rock has enjoyed royal patronage; our young princes and princesses were brought up on it. It is made in six different colours and as many flavours.

These are serious confections, to be taken seriously. It has, indeed, been asserted that: "There are two divisions of Scotland. Not the Highlands and the Lowlands, as might be imagined, for some Highlanders eat Edinburgh rock, and some Lowlanders Forfar rock. The divisions are the Edinburgh rock area and the Forfar rock area, and they are separated, broadly speaking, by the Tay."

Forfar rock has been noted for nearly a century. The famous Peter Reid, who made it, was a philanthropist as well as a confectioner. He spent nearly the whole of a fortune, acquired by the sale of the rock, in endowing Forfar with a park, a public hall, and other improvements. He was a politician of some notoriety, and enjoyed the friendship of the Right Hon. John Morley. He was ninety-four when he died, and a few years since Forfar erected a statue to his memory. Few people went to the town without visiting his shop to buy rock and, if possible, to have a chat with Sheriff Reid. He was famed for his pawky sayings. In addition to his predilection for politics, he had a taste for philosophy and natural history. In the garden behind his shop he had built bird-houses, where wild birds of all sorts nested year after year. The well-known rock is still sold in a tiny shop fifteen feet square by eight feet high. Yet on Forfar market day the sales amount in value to hundreds of pounds.

Everton, near Liverpool, is, as everyone knows, famous for its toffee. Everton toffee makes no pretence to antiquity. However, the story of its origin is interesting. In Everton, about the beginning of last century, there lived Molly Bushell, a widow with a large family. A kind-hearted Liverpool doctor, who attended Mrs. Bushell, suggested to her the idea of making the toffee, providing her with the recipe. It was sold then as a remedy for coughs and colds. It was such a palatable medicine that persons of all degrees flocked to the shop. When it ceased to be advertised as a specific, the habit of eating it, one may imagine, had become ingrained.

The Pontefract cake is good to eat and good for you as well. It is for coughs and colds. The basis of it is liquorice, which grows to perfection in the neighbourhood.

It may be interesting to add that the Main Yard of Pontefract Castle—a very spacious piece of ground—was for a couple of centuries after the demolition of the buildings in 1648–9 devoted to the growth of liquorice, giving rise to the well-known Latin couplet which, translated, runs :—

> Where once the stately castle stood,
> The luscious liquorice now grows.

The popularity of the Pontefract cake shows no sign of waning. Thousands of tons are manufactured and sold every year. Its fame has reached, indeed, unto the ends of the world, and Messrs. Robinson and Wordsworth, one of the oldest and most enterprising of the group of manufacturers whose energies are devoted to the transformation of liquorice root into the "Pomfret Cake" of commerce, have even established a large agency at Cairo, with a branch at Khartoum! The secrets of manufacture are most jealously guarded against lay inquisitiveness, but liquorice extract, sugar, and a greater or less quantity of flour, according to quality, are the main ingredients. The "Pomfret Cake" dates back for centuries, one firm recently absorbed in another having been in existence over 150 years. Nowadays "Pomfret Cakes" are largely manufactured in Birmingham, and even in Germany and America.

Among cakes endowed with local names, but nowadays manufactured more widely than at first, may be recalled the "Parkin" cakes, which still bear the description of "Yorkshire," and "Petticoat Tails" chiefly known as "Edinburgh."

And, after all, we have exhausted our space in mention only of what have been called "Strongholds of Giant Sweet-Tooth." The meat-foods, cheeses, and other provisions that take their names from well-known places are many, and include such well-known friends as the Melton Mowbray Pie, the Cambridge Sausage, the Bath Chap, and the Cheddar Cheese. But these are taken for granted by the housekeeper, while the young idea, at any rate, still scents romance in the localised sweetstuff.

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A Windsor Foreword.

Ten years have elapsed since **"THE WONDERFUL WINDSOR"** (as no less an authority than "The Times" has called it) first established the Record in Christmas Number Enterprise. The forthcoming **DECEMBER** issue will be a

Superb Double Number

which will do far more than merely repeat former triumphs. It will have new features, which for sheer magnitude and attractiveness will eclipse even its own predecessors. That this is no boast will at once be seen from the following list of contributors. The leading Novelists who will be represented within the covers of this remarkable issue are:—

ANTHONY HOPE

Egerton Castle
H. B. Marriott Watson
Robert Barr
Tom Gallon
E. Nesbit
S. R. Crockett
Eden Phillpotts
H. C. Bailey
Mrs. Thurston
Baroness Von Hutten
Maarten Maartens
Ian Maclaren
E. P. Oppenheim
Hamilton Drummond
Frank Richardson
Justus Miles Forman

RUDYARD KIPLING

Among the leading features of this **GREAT DOUBLE NUMBER** will be the opening instalment of

ANTHONY HOPE'S New Romance, "Sophy of Kravonia,"

In which the celebrated Novelist returns to the vein of "The Prisoner of Zenda."

RUDYARD KIPLING'S Latest Story, "With the Night Mail,"

Will be given complete in this DOUBLE NUMBER, though longer than anything the author has lately published. . . .

The other leading serial feature will be a succession of romantic stories, each complete in a number, yet forming a connected story, by

JUSTUS MILES FORMAN.

This Series, under the title of . . . . **"A Modern Ulysses,"**

Will be found to surpass in vigour and charm even that enormously successful WINDSOR Serial, "The Garden of Lies."

In all this wealth of fiction by the **GREAT NOVELISTS,** however, the world of fact will not be neglected, and the special articles will prove the most varied and the most valuable that any one issue of a magazine has ever yet comprised. Among the contributors to this department will be:—

The Duke of Argyll
Miss Ellen Terry
Harry Furniss
Charles G. D. Roberts
The Right Hon. James Bryce, M.P.

And the first of a series of articles will inaugurate a very notable new feature in the form of a

Portfolio of Cartoons of Celebrities

Printed in colour and accompanied by biographical letterpress. This will form a remarkable **PORTRAIT RECORD OF OUR OWN TIMES** of real historical value.

A Special Fine-Art feature will include

16 Beautiful Plate Reproductions of Famous Pictures,

and the whole number will be printed for the most part on a **SPECIAL ART PAPER** in the interests of the distinguished artists whose services have been secured.

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THE SPECULATIONS OF JACK STEELE.

By ROBERT BARR.*

VI.—THE RICHEST WOMAN IN THE WORLD.

CLEARING in the primeval forest had been only partial, for several tall trees were left standing here and there, grouped around a log-house. The house itself, to a casual observer, resembled the dwelling of an ordinary pioneer, except that it was much larger than any residence a poor woodman was likely to erect. It was built of great pine logs, the ends roughly dovetailed together with a woodman's axe. Where log lay on log, the interstices were plastered with clay. A broad verandah ran completely round the oblong building, a luxury which the pioneer would have denied himself. A settler would also have been contented to cover his roof with split oak clapboards, but here the refinement of yellow pine shingles was used, which not only kept out the weather better than the pioneer's economical device, but caused the tone of the broad roof to harmonise well with the hue of the bark on the logs; and as one approached the edifice from the forest, the whole structure, standing out against the background of deep blue afforded by the lake and sky, formed a more pleasing colour scheme than might have been expected where contrasts were so vivid in that translucent air. Around the large log-house were grouped many other log-buildings, with no attempt at regulation and order. Each one appeared to have been put up as needed, and these ranged from an ordinary outhouse or shed, to complete residences. A few hundred yards away from the verandah of the house, down a sloping lawn, lay sands of dazzling whiteness, and along these sands rippled the smallest waves of the largest lake in the world.

No such body of fresh water as Lake Superior exists anywhere else on earth. The water in bulk is blue; taken in detail, it is almost invisible; and this was strikingly illustrated by an adjunct of civilisation which no stretch of the imagination could attach to pioneer days. Anchored in the bay floated a large white steam-yacht, with two funnels and two slender, sloping masts. It seemed resting, not on the surface of the lake, but in mid-air, for the details of the twin screws, the long, level keel, and submerged part of the prow were as plain to the eye as the upper works or the funnels or the masts. The waters of this thousand-feet deep lake are so cold that anyone who drops overboard is given up as lost. The Arctic chill of the crystal fluid, even in midsummer, is so great that it instantly paralyses effort, and the man sinks never to rise again, for the bodies of the drowned remain for ever in those depths.

To the south and east and west, this little oasis of civilisation was walled in by the eternal forest. To the north, blue lake and blue sky blended together. On this day in late summer the place was a Paradise of solitude. The great lake, which on occasion could raise a storm that might swamp an Atlantic liner, was now placid and on its good behaviour. The only sounds were the gentle whisper of the leaves in the forest and the impatient pawing of a horse, which a groom held, saddled, by the southern verandah.

Through the open doorway there presently emerged a young woman, in a tight-fitting riding-habit, so short in the skirt that it appeared more like a walking-dress than a costume for an equestrienne. The girl seemed very slight, and not as tall as the average woman. In spite of the frown on her brow, the face was redeemed from absolute ugliness by some indescribable spiritual intellectuality which beamed from it. The whole figure gave an impression of darkness. The hair was black, the complexion almost that of a North American Indian. The eyes of velvet midnight could sparkle with dark anger, but at times would melt into a glance of appeal that was strangely pathetic, which partially

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redeemed the harshness of the other features. The costume was of unrelieved black, but the attention of a stranger invariably returned again and again to the face, puzzled by it. It seemed to stamp its owner as querulous, fretful, supremely selfish perhaps, caring nothing for the feelings of others. She spoke with cutting sharpness to her groom, who had not placed the horse to please her. The man did his best, but the animal was restive from its long wait, and with a snarl of impatience at what she called the stupidity of the groom, the girl sprang with great dexterity into her saddle, gathered the reins in her left hand, and struck the animal a savage blow on the flank with her whip. The horse snorted and reared, pawing the air, and again the whip descended. Now he tried to bolt, but she held him firmly, in spite of her seemingly slight physique, and at last the frightened horse stood there trembling, but mastered.

"The horse reared and for a brief second lifted the man off his feet."

"Shall I follow you, madam?" inquired the groom.

"Don't ask unnecessary questions!" snapped the girl, scowling at him as if she were in half a mind to hit him as well as the horse with the whip. "If I wished you to follow me, I should have told you so."

The cringing groom raised his forefinger to the peak of his cap and slunk away. The horse would have cantered, feeling the exhilaration of the air and the delight of the day in its supple limbs, but the girl appeared to take a grim pleasure in restraining the ardour of her steed and forcing him to a slow walk. The horsewoman certainly rode well and looked well in the saddle, but her face was marred by an expression of chronic discontent, which perhaps had a right to be there, for she was accounted the richest woman in the world, living what she supposed to be the simple life.

Constance Berrington was one of those unhappy persons whose every wish had been gratified almost before it could be expressed. Slight as she appeared, her health was excellent, and she had never yet come upon a crisis in life which money could not smooth

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away. It would have done her a world of good to be compelled to earn her living for a year, and meet a section of humanity she had never yet encountered, who cared not a rap whether she lived or died. But at this moment, when her ill-temper caused her to curb the eager horse to a slow walk, she was playing into the hands of the enemy in a manner that would have startled her had she but known.

Parallel with her course, a stooping man dodged from tree to tree. There was something of the stealthiness of the savage about him, and he took all the precautions of a savage to avoid observation—precautions that were unnecessary in this case, for the girl was absorbed in the conquering of her horse, and the horse's own hoofs in the pine needles made noise enough to render inaudible the footsteps of the pursuer. For more than a mile the conscious hunter and the unconscious hunted kept their course. The ground rose perceptibly all the way, but at last became tolerably level, and then the girl shook out the reins and settled herself for a gallop. But at that instant, the wary pursuer, who day after day during the past month had been baffled by the speed of the horse, sprang out from behind a tree and seized the bridle near the bit. The face of the woman became a shade less swarthy with the sudden fright of this assault, and although she did not cry out or scream, her inward panic was in no way lessened by the sight of the countenance turned upon her. The complexion had the pallor of one risen from the dead, the colourless lips were compressed, and the features drawn and haggard, like those of a man in the last stages of starvation. All the life of this person seemed concentrated in his eyes, which glowed upon her with the fierce light of lunacy.

"Let go my horse!" she said in a low, tense voice.

The man tightened his grip.

"Keep quiet!" he snarled.

She raised her arm and struck the animal with all the force at her command, then with both hands jerked the reins and tried to ride down her obstructor. The horse reared and for a brief second lifted the man off his feet; but he held on, and horse and man came to the ground together.

"By Heaven!" he cried, "if you try to do a trick like that again, I'll throw both you and the horse, and break your cursed neck! Drop that whip, you vixen!"

Instead of dropping it, she raised it again, leaning forward this time to strike the man; but he sprang towards her, holding the rein in his right hand, and with his left caught the whip as it descended, and wrenched it rudely from her grasp. For a moment she thought he was about to strike her, and her arm rose waveringly to protect her face.

"*Will* you keep still?" he demanded.

"If you want money," she said in the quiet, semi-contemptuous tone with which she would have addressed a beggar, "you might have the sense to know that I carry none with me in the forest."

"I want money," he replied, "and I *have* the sense to know you carry none with you."

"Then how do you expect to obtain it by this violence?"

"That I shall have the pleasure of explaining to you a little further on."

She folded her empty hands on her knee, now that he was possessed of both whip and rein.

"I advise you, sir, to turn my horse's head in the other direction, and warn you that you will make less by threats than by trusting to my good will."

"I reject your advice, Miss Berrington. The philanthropy of your family is well-known and widely advertised. Your good deeds rise up and call you blessed; but I am not an object of charity, although I may look it. The sum which I demand I shall exact by coercion."

"Oh, very well. Set about it, then. Pray do not allow me to hinder you in the least."

"Thank you, Miss Berrington; you shall not."

Placing the riding-rein over his arm, he turned his back upon her and led the horse along the level towards the west for perhaps half a mile further, when he deflected to the right until they arrived at the top of a high cliff overlooking the lake. Neither had spoken a word during the journey, and Constance Berrington sat very rigidly on her led horse, like a clothed Lady Godiva, *sans* the beauty. The look of discontent, however, had vanished from her face, and the expression which took its place was not unpleasing.

At the cliff her leader stopped, swung round, and said gruffly: "Get down!" without, however, making any offer to assist her.

She sprang lightly from the saddle to the ground and stood there, as if awaiting further commands.

"Seat yourself on that log."

A fallen tree which one of the winter storms had uprooted lay with its branches

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far out over the chasm. The girl sat down on the trunk as she had been directed.

"I am John Steele, of Chicago," he said.

"That does not interest me," replied the young lady.

"Have you ever heard the name before?"

"No, and don't wish to hear it again."

"Six months ago I was worth ten millions."

"That does not interest me, either."

"You need not reiterate the statement, madam; I shall interest you before I am done with you."

"I wish you were not so slow about it, then."

"Do you know a man named Nicholson?"

"Yes."

"Nicholson tried first to ruin me and then to murder me."

The young man paused, as if to allow this startling sentence to produce its effect. The young woman's eyes were upon the ground, but after a few moments of silence she looked up at him with a languid air of indifference and said—

"Is this the interesting part? Is any comment expected of me? If so, I can only say that Mr. Nicholson is usually successful in what he attempts, and I deeply regret the failure of his second project. It would have saved me from a most unpleasant encounter."

"'Now, Mr. John Steele, of Chicago, what is the next move?'"

"Quite so," said Steele, tightening his lips. "I am glad you take it that way. Nicholson, as, of course, you know, was acting for the organisation which, I understand, contributes some fifty millions a year towards your support. In spite of your humane wish, he failed in his two attempts, but his third conspiracy succeeded."

"Ah! you were right, Mr. Steele, you *do* interest me. What did he endeavour to do on the third occasion? Consign you to a lunatic asylum?"

"No. To tell you the truth, madam, I feared that would come of itself. The fact that I have not gone mad under the silent persecution I was called upon to endure leads me to suppose that I shall hereafter be proof against any malady of the mind."

"I do not in the least doubt that. Nothing can damage a sanity already destroyed. If you are not a lunatic, you are worse—a cowardly hound who dares to offer violence to an unprotected woman."

Slowly the colour mounted in John Steele's pale face, and a glint of admiration came into his eyes. The little woman was absolutely at his mercy, yet she said these words with perfect serenity and turned upon him a gaze that was quite fearless. He noticed now for the first time the gloomy

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depths of those dark eyes, and thought how much more steadfast and beautiful they were than the blue orbs which had crazed his brain on the plains.

"Not such a coward as you think me, madam. Now that we are entirely free from any chance of molestation, when you must recognise your own helplessness, I beg to assure you that I shall treat you with the utmost courtesy."

"Thank you. But let us get to the point. You are John Steele. You were worth ten millions. Nicholson plotted against you and ruined you. Nicholson is one of the combination in New York from which I draw my money. In spite of what you say, you are too much of a coward to face Nicholson; therefore you have endeavoured to kidnap me and terrorise me into giving you a cheque for ten million dollars. How near am I right?"

"You are exactly right, madam."

"Very well. Although I am no admirer of Mr. Nicholson, nevertheless it is easy to see why he defeated you. A man who takes so long to reach the kernel of his business may be all very well in Chicago, but he has no right to pit himself against a citizen of New York. I refuse to give you one penny."

"Don't say 'give,' madam, I beg of you. 'Restore' is the word. As I told you, I am making no appeal to the renowned philanthropy of the Berringtons. My ten millions, although lost to me, has gone into the coffers of your company. You have no more right to it than I have to this horse. I have a right to it because I made it without cheating anybody. I made it legitimately. I demand it back."

"I have already refused. What is your next move?"

"My next move will take some little time to tell, and you are so impatient of my loquacity that I almost fear to venture——"

"Oh, pray go on!" she cried wearily.

"Does the height make you dizzy? I should like to have you look over this cliff."

"It doesn't make me in the least dizzy. I know the cliff very well, and have been here many times. There are five or six hundred feet of sheer precipice, then a ledge of rock, then the lake."

"You have described it admirably, madam. Well, what I shall do is this. I possess, within a mile and a half of this place, a log-cabin not so large or comfortable as your house. I intend to take you there and to hold you prisoner until I receive back what is mine."

"Mr. Nicholson would have mapped out a more feasible plan. How long do you think I shall remain captive without being found? To-morrow there will be a hue and cry after me—to-night, indeed, if I do not return. I shall be tracked by dogs, or an Indian will be got and put on the trail. Your scheme is absurd, Mr. Steele."

"You have forgotten the cliff, madam. I shall lead your horse to the edge of the cliff, strike him with your whip, and send him over. He will lie dashed to death on the ledge six hundred feet below. The Indian or the dog will trace the horse to this cliff. It will be naturally supposed that you have been flung into the waters of the lake, which are another six hundred feet deep. Then the search will end, madam. Lake Superior never gives up its dead, and to dredge at that depth is impossible."

"I beg your pardon," she said; "your plan is better than I thought. There is just the risk that the horse, poor creature, may bound from the ledge into the lake, and in that case the search would not end at the cliff."

Saying this, she rose and walked bravely to the extreme edge, looking over.

"Don't go near!" cried John Steele, taking a step towards her. She paid no heed to him, and for a moment he held his breath in alarm as she walked along the very brink of the precipice. Then she turned listlessly.

"Alas!" she said, "the ledge is quite wide enough for your purpose."

"Oh, I have planned it all out," replied John, relief coming to his voice as she turned away from danger with her head lowered as if in deep thought. Then she took him entirely unawares. With a spring forward like that of a lynx, she jerked the reins from his unprepared hand. Flicking the horse sharply with the loose leather, making him snort and shy with fear, she then smote him with her open palms on the flank, and away he galloped in a panic of fright. The face she turned to the astonished man seemed transformed. The black eyes danced with delight. She sank to the log again, shaking with laughter.

"Oh, I was wrong, Mr. Steele, when I said you didn't interest me! You do, you do! I have never met so interesting a man before. In twenty minutes, or thereabouts, the riderless horse gallops into my courtyard. Now, Mr. John Steele, of Chicago, what is the next move?"

"Well, logically," said John Steele, unable to repress a smile, grave as was his situation

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and quick his recognition of its seriousness, "logically the next move should be for me to throw you over the cliff."

"No, that wouldn't be logical. It seems, to the poor reason that a woman possesses, Mr. Nicholson is the man who should be thrown over."

"I am rather inclined to agree with you, Miss Berrington; but, alas! Nicholson is in New York, and you are the only member of the company now in my power."

"Are you quite sure I am in your power?" she asked, looking up at him.

"Frankly, I'm inclined to doubt it."

"I haven't laughed for years," she said, "not since I was a girl."

"Oh, you're nothing more than a girl now."

"I'm afraid I act like it," she said, flushing slightly, and that evidently not from displeasure. "You are mistaken about Mr. Nicholson being in New York. Did you see that white yacht in front of my house?"

"Yes."

"Well, that belongs to Mr. Nicholson."

"Is he your guest?" asked John, the light of battle coming into his eyes.

"No, he is in Duluth. He went there a few days ago in his yacht, and sent the vessel back, in case I should wish a sail on the lake. Shall I arrange a meeting between you?"

"I suppose you will not credit me, Miss Berrington, when I tell you that I do not wish to meet Mr. Nicholson, and it is not cowardice which keeps me from the encounter. If I met him, I should kill him; then the law would hang me, and I have no desire to be executed."

"Oh, you are quite safe in Michigan," said the girl encouragingly; "there is no capital punishment in this State."

"I had forgotten about that, if I ever knew it. You see, I live in Illinois, and Nicholson lives in New York. In the one State they hang, and in the other they electrocute. It may be weak in me, but I shrink from either of those ordeals, much as I detest Nicholson."

The girl rose to her feet, put up both hands to her hair, and arranged the black tresses that had gone astray.

"How long have you possessed your log-cabin, Mr. Steele?"

"About two months. One month I have spent around your house watching for you; but you have always left on a gallop, or else that confounded groom of yours was following you, and I didn't want to hurt him. In truth, I didn't wish to hurt anybody."

"Poor man! have you been lingering in the forest all that time? No wonder you look like an escaped convict."

"Do I?" asked Jack in alarm, glancing down at his ragged garments. "I suppose I do. Since I came into the forest I have paid no attention to my personal appearance. Pray accept my apologies."

"Oh, don't mention it. I imagine you didn't expect to meet a lady."

"Well, I've been frustrated so often that I suppose I did not."

"You are, then, my nearest neighbour? By the rights of etiquette I should have made the first call, being the older resident. I think, however, Mr. Steele, that your methods of teaching me politeness to a new-comer were somewhat rough. So, if you will excuse me, I shall not go with you to your log-cabin this evening. It is getting late; see how low the sun has sunk, and how gloriously he lights up the lake."

"Yes," said John somewhat dolefully, "it reminds me of the copper situation here."

"It is copper that brings Mr. Nicholson to this district," she replied brightly, "although I suppose I should not tell that to an opposing speculator."

"Oh, hang Nicholson!" said Jack hastily; then: "Really, I beg your pardon, madam. I have been a savage these two months past, as you very rightly remarked."

"I was going to say," she went on, "that if you will waive etiquette and come and dine with me to-night, I shall be very glad of your company."

"Oh, really, Miss Berrington, that is heaping coals of fire on this touzled head of mine. I could not venture into a civilised household in these rags. I am sure you will excuse me."

"Indeed I shall not. I make a bold appeal to your gallantry. I do not know my way; I am certain to get lost in the forest. You see, my horse has always been my guide, and, entirely through your fault, my horse is no longer here to lead me through the woods; so please be my pathfinder."

"Certainly, certainly I'll lead you to the gates; but don't ask me to come in. I'm very much ashamed of myself, and I assure you that if your horse were here, I should help you to mount, and allow you to depart unscathed."

"You didn't help me to dismount," said the girl, glancing at him with eyes brimful of mischief, and laughing again.

With something of his old-time heartiness, Jack laughed at her readiness of repartee.

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"Ah! you should not hold that against me. We were not acquainted then. It seems years ago, instead of minutes. I think if you and I had met when I first called on you, my later troubles would all have been averted."

"Oh, they did not tell me you had called."

"My visit was to your palace on Fifth Avenue, where I was received by a gorgeous individual with a Cockney accent, whose knowledge of geography was such that he supposed Lake Saratoga and Lake Superior were neighbours and about of a size."

"Really? You met Fletcher, then? Poor man, he is quite lost now, for I have him here with me in the woods. Nicholson brought him in the yacht. I rather suspect that the quiet Mr. Nicholson wishes to acquire this man's services; but, thank goodness, I can always outbid him, and Fletcher is peculiarly susceptible to the charms of money."

"Fletcher seems to be in demand, then?"

"Oh, he is most useful; but I fancy—which is a word he is very fond of—that he is very unhappy, for I have compelled him to abandon the gorgeous raiment and dress as a northern farmer. I fear I shall need to restore his plumage, for he seems to think he has lost caste entirely. I am unable to convince him that he has gained it; but perhaps when he sees you in such raiment, and learns you were worth ten millions six months ago, he will be reconciled."

They were walking homeward through the forest, but at this remark John stopped and said ruefully: "Look here, Miss Berrington, if you are merely taking me with you to show Fletcher how badly a man may be costumed, I shall at once return to my cabin, for I have another suit there. I think that allusion to my clothes was most unkind, just as I was trying to forget them."

"Indeed, I am going to turn you over to Fletcher, who will see that you are clothed, now that you are in your right mind. I think this is the spot where I first had the pleasure of meeting you, Mr. Steele."

"Now, that's another subject you are not to refer to."

"He rose and took the hand she offered, raising it to his lips."

"Dear me, I must get you to write out a list of them," and the sprightly little woman looked up at him with merriment sparkling in her fine eyes. No one would have recognised her as the Tartar who a short time before had browbeaten her servant and lashed her horse.

A cry rang out through the forest.

"They are looking for me," she said. "Answer the call."

Jack Steele lifted up his voice and gave utterance to a piercing scream that rent the

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silence like the soul-scattering screech of a locomotive.

"Bless us and keep us!" cried Constance Berrington, covering her small ears with her small hands, "is that an Indian war-whoop, that once used to resound in this wilderness?"

"No, it's the acme of civilisation—merely a college yell. If any of your people are graduates of Chicago University, they'll recognise it."

The people who were not graduates of anything, except the college of hard labour, hurried to meet them with anxious faces.

"No, I am not in the least hurt," said Constance Berrington quite composedly. "I was merely compelled to dismount more rapidly than I usually do. Did the horse get home all right?"

"Yes, miss."

"Oh, then everything is as it should be. Luckily this gentleman was near by, and I came to no harm. Fletcher!"

The dejected, crestfallen man came slowly to the front, while she advanced a few rapid steps towards him, gave him some instructions in an undertone, and the search-party left under his leadership for the house, Steele and the girl following them at their leisure.

"How true it is that fine feathers make fine birds!" said Jack. "I never should have recognised Fletcher, whom I once took to be the finest specimen of our race."

"It's a poor rule that doesn't work both ways," laughed the girl. "Did you notice that Fletcher failed to recognise you?"

"Oh, I *will* go back and get that other suit!" cried Jack, coming to a standstill. "Don't wait dinner for me."

"Nonsense!" she said, letting her hand rest for one brief moment on his arm. "I didn't think men were so vain."

"I'm afraid you don't know much about them, Miss Berrington."

"I didn't until to-day. I've had my eyes opened."

"Well, I must make one proviso. You are to return my visit."

"Will you wear the other suit then?"

"Yes, I will; and besides that, I have a negro cook who can prepare a meal that will surprise you, in our neck of the woods."

"A negro cook? Dear me, I thought you were ruined!"

"Oh, well, in a manner of speaking, so I am, now you mention it; but still, let us live by the way, you know."

When they reached the clearing, Fletcher was awaiting them on the verandah.

"If you will come with me, sir," he said, "I shall take you to the guest-house."

"Dinner at seven. Fletcher will show you the way to the dining-room. Until then, *au revoir!*" and the girl disappeared into the log-house, while Fletcher escorted Steele to a building near by and ushered him into a sumptuous bedroom facing the lake. On the bed was laid out a dress-suit and all that pertained to it.

"I think you will find this about your size, sir. If not, I can get you one larger or smaller, as you wish."

"Good gracious!" said Jack, "do you keep a clothing store out here in the backwoods?"

"Well, sir, for a country 'ouse situated as this is——"

"So far from London, eh?"

"Well, yes, sir, we are very well stocked, sir. And now, sir, if you'd like a hair-cut, or your beard trimmed——"

"What! do you keep a barber, too? Thank Heaven!"

"Well, sir, you see, I used to be servant to General Sir Grundy Whitcombe, of the British Army, sir, and they do be particular."

"Do you mean to hint you can shave me, Fletcher, and cut my hair?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"Well, now, Fletcher, you don't look like an angel, but that's exactly what you are. I'll have the beard cut away entirely, but leave the moustache where it is; and if you give me the hair-crop of a British general, why, I've nothing more to ask in this life."

"Very good, sir," consented the admirable Fletcher.

When he had finished, and Jack looked at the result in the mirror, he absent-mindedly thrust his hand into his pocket, but brought it forth empty. Fletcher was regarding him with admiration.

"By Jove!" cried the young man, "I haven't got a *sou* markee on me; but I won't forget you, Fletcher. I'll see you later, as we say out West, and you won't lose by it."

"Well, sir, I think I remember you now, sir; and if I may make so bold as to say it, sir, I'm already in your debt. Her Ladyship—I mean, Miss Berrington—being as she was thrown from her horse, sir, and you 'andy to 'elp 'er, you got the right kind of introduction, after all, sir."

"Ah, Fletcher, it seems like it, doesn't it?"

A great deal of nonsense has been written about the inartistic qualities of the modern dress-suit. The truth is that no other costume so befits a stalwart, good-looking

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young man. It is in plain black and white, and has none of the effeminacy of lace and ruffles and colour which made a fop of the dandy centuries ago. There is a manly dignity about dinner-dress which nothing else can give—except, perhaps, a suit of armour, and that has its inconveniences at table.

When Miss Berrington entered the dining-room, and found her guest standing by the huge open log-fire, awaiting her, she stopped still for a moment in amazement, and then an expression of unqualified admiration came over her ever-changing face.

"Why—why——" she hesitated, as he came eagerly forward with a smile to meet her, "is this really Mr. Steele?"

"It is Fletcher's Mr. Steele, madam. You have tamed the bear, Miss Berrington, and Fletcher has groomed him, that's all."

"I remember, Mr. Steele, that you interdicted the topic of costume; but may I be permitted the vanity of congratulating Fletcher and myself on our collaboration?"

Jack laughed as he led her to her place at the table.

"In my youth I read once of an enchanted land, presided over by a fairy princess, so gracious and so good that when outside barbarians wandered into her realm, they became what we would call civilised; but I never knew this land and this princess existed until to-day."

In the soft glow of the shaded candles the expressive face of the girl seemed almost handsome. She wore no jewels, but even the young man's uncritical eye could not mistake the richness and exquisite design of her evening-gown, which indicated that if this young woman shunned Society, she had certainly chosen an artist for her dressmaker.

The dinner was so excellent that Jack Steele regretted he had mentioned his negro cook. White fish from the icy waters of Lake Superior is unequalled by anything that swims, unless it be the brook-trout which the northern streams that enter Lake Superior produce. Wild turkey of the Michigan woods is world-renowned as the choicest of game.

Although Steele's hostess drank nothing but cold spring water, an ancient and renowned vintage sparkled at his right hand. It is little wonder that Jack, healthily hungry, was brilliant that evening as even he had never been before, and this poor, rich girl who listened, delighted and amazed, began to wonder if, after all, she had not missed a good deal out of life by flouting smart Society which she considered frivolous.

After dinner, Constance Berrington put a shawl over her shoulders and asked her guest if he would come outside and see the lake glittering in the moonlight. On the verandah he found the unique arrangement of an outside fireplace facing the platform, and in its depths roared a hickory fire, which burns with a flame bright as electric light, and leaves an ash white as flour. Two screens of sailcloth drawn like curtains along the roof of the verandah partially fenced in this snug spot, leaving it open only towards the lake. The white yacht lay like a liner's ghost on the silver sea, bathed in the light of the moon, and now and then the phantom ship gave forth melodious sounds as it chimed the hours in nautical fashion, the peal sweetly mellowed by the intervening water. Jack laughed in boyish glee to find himself in such a Paradise.

"I never saw anything so beautiful," he said; "nor have I ever known so ambitious a fireplace, trying to warm all outdoors."

Two rocking-chairs awaited them, and between these chairs stood a round table, on which the silent servant placed coffee and liqueurs. The hickory fire kindled a gleam of ineffable satisfaction in Jack's eyes when a box of prime cigars was placed before him.

"May I really smoke?" he asked, taking one between his fingers.

"I believe that is what they are for," replied the girl, with a smile, rocking gently to and fro. Then, when they were alone, she said seriously—

"Mr. Steele, I want you to tell me the particulars of the conspiracies you referred to, that proved so disastrous to you."

"Dear princess," he answered earnestly, "do you think I am going to talk finance in the land of enchantment? Not likely. Do monetary centres exist in the world? I don't believe it. Are people struggling anywhere to defeat each other? This silver silence denies it."

"But the silence is not going to deny me," she persisted. "I must know. You said I was responsible."

"I said such a thing? Never! That is a mistake in identity. You are thinking of the barbarian whom you quite justly tried to ride down in the forest. He said many stupid and false things, for which I refuse to assume responsibility. Reluctantly I admit that that barbarian was my ancestor, but a thousand years have passed since he lived, and I say the race has improved."

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He blew a whiff of smoke into the still air and, watching it waft upward, murmured softly—

"And yet those wretched comic papers say a woman cannot choose cigars."

"I am glad they are good. It was not I who selected them, but Mr. Nicholson."

If some of the icy water of Lake Superior had unexpectedly dropped upon him, he could not have appeared more startled than at the mention of this name.

"Ye gods!" he whispered huskily, "I had forgotten that man existed! For years he has never been out of my mind before."

The girl's eloquent eyes were fixed upon him.

"The smoke has disappeared into the blue," she said, "but that name has brought you to earth again. Now tell me what he did."

"Miss Berrington," he went on solemnly, "you are no more responsible for what Mr. Nicholson did, than I am for the actions of the savage who seized your horse. Let me forget again that either the white Indian or the savage ever lived."

"No," she said, "you must tell me." And so he told her, sometimes puffing at his cigar like a steam-engine, again almost allowing it to go out. The narration was vivid, but possibly it might have been more interesting if he had not substituted the father for the daughter in Miss Alice Fuller's case. When the recital was finished, the girl shivered a little; and seeing he noticed it, she said—

"'I'll not accept your cheque, but I ask you to accept me."

"I think it is getting cold, in spite of our fire. And now I shall bid you 'Good night.' I have to thank you for the most interesting day and evening I ever spent in my life. Good night, and I hope you will not dream of Mr. Nicholson."

He rose and took the hand she offered, raising it, before she was aware, to his lips.

"Princess," he said, "I know of whom I shall dream."

She laughed a little and was gone.

When the maid had girded round her the soft and trailing dressing-gown, and bade her mistress 'Good night,' Constance Berrington opened the window, knelt down before it, placed her elbows on the low sill, with her chin on her open palms, and remained thus gazing at the moonlit lake. The ship of mist tolled the unheeded hours as on a silver chime. At last, with a sigh that seemed to end in a sob, she murmured—

"Oh, how beautiful the world is! and yet I never appreciated it before!"

Then she closed her window.

The informative Fletcher told Steele that the breakfast-hour was nine, and the grandfather clock was striking as he entered the dining-room next morning. The fragrance of the coffee-urn was stimulating to a man from the keen outer air, and the girl who presided over it turned towards him a smiling face, radiant as the dawn. Steele spread out his arms.

"What do you think of this?" he cried, jovial as a lad with a holiday. "This is the other suit."

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"Dear me!" replied Constance Berrington. "How came it here?"

"I was up this morning before five, donned my rags, tramped to my hut, comforted my negro, who was nearly white with panic at my absence, put on the other suit, and here I am."

The breakfast was even more intimate and delightful than the dinner had been. Daylight had not removed the glamour of the moon from the land of enchantment. When the meal was finished, Constance Berrington rose and said—

"Before you go, I wish to show you my library."

He followed her into this attractive room, its walls lined with books. Here and there were cosy alcoves and recesses, with leather-covered easy-chairs that might have graced a metropolitan club.

"I never had much time for reading," he said, "and I do envy you this room. My own library is small, consisting mainly of books by friends of mine who kindly presented me with some of their writings."

"Then I wish you to accept a specimen of my works. My writings may not be very literary, but they are concise and to the point."

Here she placed a slip of paper before him, and glancing at it, he saw it was a cheque for ten millions. Then he looked up at her, a slow smile coming to his lips, and shook his head.

"Princess, this is for the savage, not for me. The savage is dead."

"You are his heir, remember."

"No, we are too far removed from each other, the savage and I. Remember the centuries between us, and less than ten years outlaws all claim."

"You must accept it. It is mere transference, as you quite rightly pointed out. It does not belong to me, but to you."

The young woman spoke with tense eagerness, and the former frown came into her brow before she had finished. He picked up the cheque.

"That's right," she said, with a sigh of relief; but the smile broadening, he slowly tore the signature from the cheque and placed her autograph in his pocket-book.

"Give me the hope that this may prove my return ticket to Paradise, and I am satisfied. Miss Berrington, you called me a coward yesterday, and you spoke the truth. I was, but I hope I am one no longer. I am young and reasonably ambitious. The world is before me. I shall begin where I began half-a-dozen years ago. I do not need your money."

"I shall write you another cheque—you must accept it."

"You dare not."

"Why?"

"Because I am your guest, and I forbid you. The rules of hospitality, madam, extend even to the land of enchantment."

"Is the guest so cruel, then"—there was a pathetic quaver in the voice—"as to leave his hostess to brood over this weight of obligation? Will he not thus, in the only possible way, lift that weight from her shoulders?"

"No!" cried Jack, coming swiftly round the table to her, "I shall lift her and the obligation together," and, suiting the action to the word, he picked her up as if she were a child and seated her on the table before him. "I'll not accept your cheque, but I ask you to accept me."

For an instant her eyes blazed up as if lighted from within, then dulled again. She did not in the least resent his boisterous action, but she shook her head and said—

"I shall never marry a man who is not in love with me, and I am too insignificant a woman for any man to love me for myself."

"Insignificant! Magnificent is the word! Why, Constance Berrington, you are the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. Your face makes every other in the world insipid. I'm not going to try and persuade you that I love you, because you know it. You knew it last night. You saw it in my eyes, and I saw the knowledge in yours. Curse the money! I'll make all the money I need if I have you by my side. What is money, anyhow? I've made it and lost it, and I can make it again and lose it again. Constance, let us take that yacht, go to Duluth, and be married before a magistrate for ten dollars, like a lumberman and his girl"

She looked up at him and smiled, then down again, then up once more, and he kissed her.

"Oh, don't!" she cried. "There is someone coming!"

A knock sounded at the door, and Miss Berrington sprang from the table.

"You have touched the electric bell that is under the carpet," she whispered quickly, with a nervous laugh; then "Come in!" she cried, and the servant entered.

"Did you ring, miss?"

"Yes, tell the captain to get the yacht ready. I am going to Duluth."

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A LOST OPPORTUNITY.

By E. E. KELLETT.

"LOOK at that silly fool trying to make the only decent master as bad as the rest!"

Hoppy was the speaker, and his indignation was righteous. Roberts, after a long course of stupid disorder in Orford's forms, had at last received a paltry fifty lines, and was making himself very objectionable in trying to get it off. Anyone could see that Orford was annoyed, and that if Roberts didn't stop he'd soon get angry.

The case was this way. Orford was quite a young chap fresh from the 'Varsity, and as decent as they make them—almost a boy, in fact. He had the Oxford tone and the Oxford ways, and used to treat the chaps pretty much as if they'd been fellow-undergrads. "Come, old chap," he'd say, "that sort of thing isn't good form, you know," instead of giving a great, thundering "impot," as the other masters would have done. He used to invite you to meals with him—"Do a 'brekker' with me, old fellow," he'd say—and then he'd tell you all sorts of stories about Blues and big men of that kind. There was precious little side about him. He wore his trousers always turned up well out of the way of his boots, and he sported a red tie. Altogether, I dare say the other masters thought him a queer sort of addition to the staff; and I have heard that some of them didn't quite like the way he was always forgetting to turn up when he'd promised; but *we* didn't mind. The more he forgot, the better for us.

"He wore his trousers always turned up well out of the way of his boots."

As soon as he got into his very first form, Hoppy saw that he was the right sort, who wouldn't try to get too much work out of us, and with whom the chaps could lead a pleasant and harmonious life, for any length of time, if they only had sense. He pointed this out to them in forcible language at the end of the morning. "Look here," he said, "you chaps don't know when you're well off. Orford's a regular decent sort; don't you go and rag him, or you'll make him as shirty as old Taylor. The right thing is to have a *mild* lark as long as you can, instead of a lively time short. Bob, you're an ass to go on as you did"—for Roberts had been "trying it on with the new man."

"Ass yourself!" retorted Roberts. "You did precious little work yourself, if it comes to that; and why shouldn't we have a good time when we can get it?"

"That's just it," said Hoppy; "but if you have sense, you can *always* have a good time. Take it mild, and you'll keep it up. But if you're not careful, you'll have your pleasure very short. Treat Orford like a gentleman, and he'll treat you like one. He doesn't want to give it us hot; but if he sees you're trying it on with him, he *will*, I can tell you. If you rag him, he'll be down on you—he's not the sort of chap to stand *much* fooling; and the worst is, he'll be down on *us*, too, as well as on you."

Bob snorted; I could see that the good advice was thrown away on him. I quite agreed with Hoppy; and the next few days made it, if possible, still more plain that he was right. You could have a very nice time with Orford if you treated him well. He used to stroll into form ten minutes late.

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and then, as often as not, he'd have forgotten his cap and gown, so that Hoppy and I could secure a little further leisure by offering to fetch them for him. He was far too gentlemanly ever to try to steal a march on the chaps, or to sneak into form before they expected him. He was, besides, always ready to enter into a quiet conversation on the last match or some chap's chances of his colours. But when he pulled himself together and said: "Now, you fellows, it's time to do a little reading, you know," we always stopped, and didn't rag. But all our ideas were being upset by Roberts, who *wouldn't* stop, and went on with inane questions, and made stupid jokes, until we saw quite plainly that something must be done, or Orford would be compelled in self-defence to assert himself, and our scheme of a long, mild, good time would be knocked on the head pretty quick.

So, when we saw Roberts, on this afternoon, plaguing Orford to let him off his beastly fifty lines, we knew that it was time for action. Orford wanted to go out for a walk, and Roberts was hanging on to him and saying all sorts of silly things. At last we could see that Orford really got angry. He turned round on Roberts, and with a few vigorous words sent him about his business with a flea in his ear.

Bob came away disconsolate; nor was his vexation diminished when he saw us waiting for him.

"Got off?" said Hoppy, more as a formal way of opening a conversation than because he wished to hear.

"No; the silly fool has doubled it, instead."

"And quite right, too," answered my friend unsympathetically. "What in the name of sense made you go and bother him like that for a measly fifty lines?"

"Because I didn't deserve them," said Bob sulkily.

"Rot! If you didn't deserve those, you've deserved ten thousand others."

"What's that got to do with it?"

"Everything. Suppose these lines *are* unfair, well, you've had your change already, and you can't complain."

"You don't talk like this when it's your own lines," said Roberts.

"If I don't, what's it matter? I'm telling you the truth now, and you know it. Here you are, always fooling around; Orford treats you a jolly sight too well. If I'd been he, I'd have given you a hiding long ago."

"Well," said Roberts, "you may say what you like, but, anyhow, I've got a hundred lines that I don't deserve; and see if I don't rag him hard in the next form, to take it out of him!"

"No, you won't," said Hoppy.

"Who's to stop me?" cried Bob.

"*We* are," answered my friend; "we are not going to have you spoiling the fun of the whole form by ragging the only decent master we've got, until you've made him as bad as the rest."

"Like to see you try it," replied Roberts, who thought no small beer of himself as a disorderly chap. "*You* aren't boss of the form yet, Hopkins."

"True enough; but if you're not careful, Orford'll soon be," said my friend calmly. "Listen to reason, Bob. It's been a kind of constitutional monarchy so far; we've had a considerable voice in the government since Orford came, and if we're careful, we can keep it up a good deal longer; but chaps like you'll soon turn him into a regular despot. I don't say make *no* row, but make it quietly, if you can."

"There you go, with your big words!" jeered Roberts, taking himself off to do his hundred lines. As we watched his retreating form, I said to Hoppy: "It's all very well, you know, but if Bob's on that tack, it will be hard to stop him. Besides, you see, we want *some* ragging in the form. Don't you think, as Bob's going it, we'd better join him and have a regular go?"

"Never!" said Hoppy decisively. "I hate this happy-go-lucky, unprincipled kind of ragging, taking things as they turn up, and keeping no hand on the wheel. System for me! Don't you see that we can get fun in a quiet way for months on end if we're careful? As it is, we haven't been overworked since Orford came. But if there's a regular row, Vernon or some other master'll hear it, and put Orford up to the tricks of the trade. As it is, we must have had some narrow squeaks. Bob's a clumsy brute; he's always overdoing things."

"True enough; but it seems like flying in the face of Providence not to have a row when you can get it."

"There are two kinds of rows," said Hoppy sententiously. "There's the great, flaring, rowdy sort of row, which generally ends in the Head having a go at you all round. And there's the subtle, delicate, but equally effective kind of row, where the master doesn't know he's being fooled at all, but is gently led on to his own destruction. The first is like a joke of Mark Twain's—it's so

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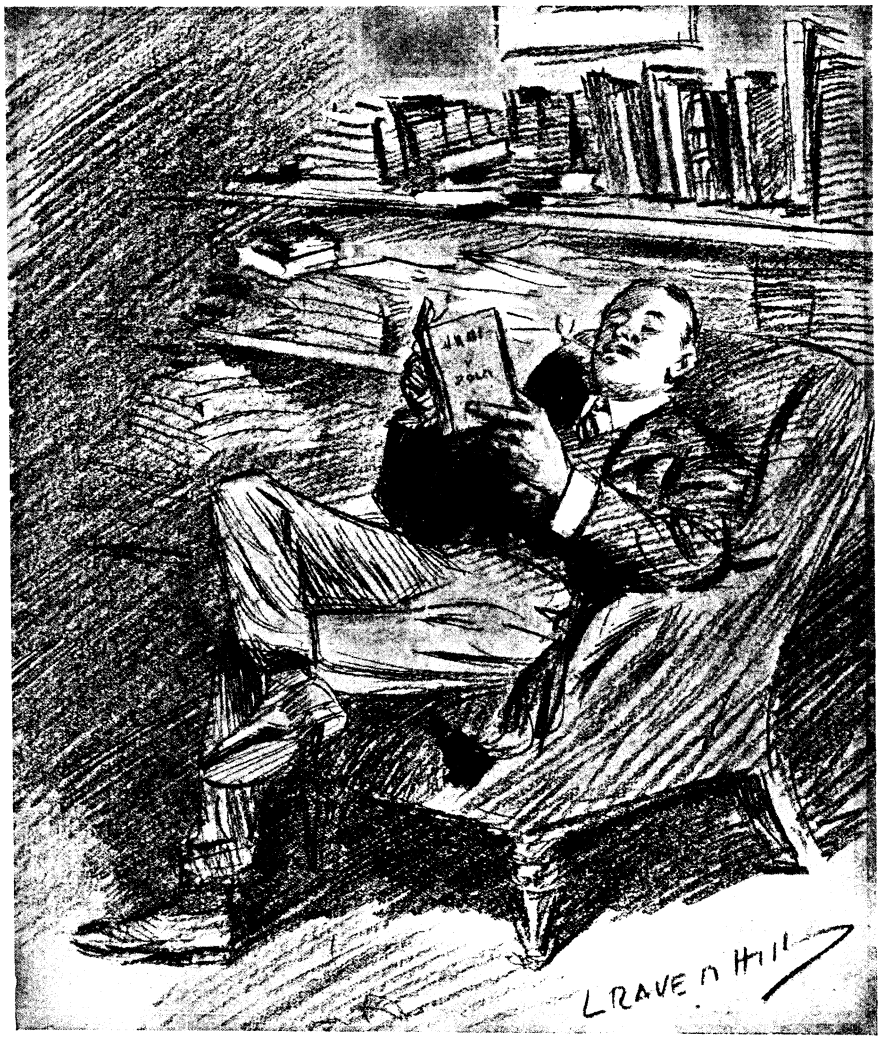

"He was lying back in his easy-chair, smoking a clay pipe and reading a yellow-back."

big that you can't doubt it's meant for a joke; the second is like the humour of Addison. I'm sick of the bow-wow kind myself; let's have the other for a time."

"But how can you get Roberts to stop *his* sort?" I said, for Hoppy was so carried away by his eloquence that he seemed likely to lose sight of mundane things.

"We *must* do it, by force if necessary," he replied. "It's a shame, too, to rag the chap as he does, for he's *such* a gentleman. Did I tell you what he did the other day?"

"No."

"Why, you remember I was making a bit of a row?"

"Yes, of course. There wasn't much of the subtle or delicate about it, either. I thought you'd forgotten your own rules and gone too far."

"So I had, perhaps, in the excitement of the moment. You can't be always artistic, you know. Well, it seemed to jar on Orford's taste. and he told me to see him afterwards in his rooms. Knowing his forgetful ways, I gave him a few minutes to settle down; and when I got there, he was lying back in his easy-chair, smoking a clay pipe and reading a yellow-back. He'd obviously forgotten all about me, and wondered what on earth I'd come for. But he wasn't the man to show annoyance. 'Sit down, old chap,' he said. 'I mustn't offer you a weed, I suppose; but there's some good grub in the cupboard.' So I had a good tuck-in, while

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he talked away of Hornby and Lucas and Lord Harris."

"A jolly piece of luck for you, Hoppy," I said enviously.

"Well," went on my friend, "after I'd eaten about as much as I decently could, conscience began to prick me."

"Of course not before," I said. "You took care to get the grub first."

"Anyhow, it *did* prick me. I thought what a shame it was to be abusing the hospitality of a man so generous as Orford; so I frankly told him why I had come. He didn't seem quite able to hitch his memory on to the right tack, and I had finally to tell him that I'd been making a row in his form, and that he'd sent for me to punish me. And then—why, you'll guess what he did."

"Can't, I'm sure," I replied.

"Why, he only said: 'All right, old man; I remember it all now. Glad you reminded me—that shows you're straight. Only don't rag again, you know; it isn't good form. There you are'—and he patted me on the shoulder and said 'So long,' so nicely that I really felt a beast for what I'd done, and made up my mind never to annoy him again."

"Quite right, too," I answered. "You're not going to give up a little artistic ragging, though, are you?"

"No, of course not. We're not going to overwork, you may be sure of that. But we're not going to do anything really rowdy."

"*We're* not; but what about Roberts?"

"Orford shan't be fooled about by an ass like that, if I can help it, that's certain."

"But *how* to help it?" I said. "We've got to act, and that quickly."

"We must think it out carefully," replied my friend. "Don't spoil things by acting in a hurry. There seem only two ways of doing it, and neither will quite suit us. Either Orford must be made strict, and then he'll be down on the whole lot of us as well as on Bob, or else we must make Bob just like the rest of us, and with such an ass that'll be hard." He paused and reflected; it was a problem worthy of his powers.

"I wonder whether we could get Bob to stay away altogether?" he said at last. "Orford would never notice he wasn't there, and perhaps Bob would prefer that to the best ragging he can get."

"Orford wouldn't notice it, if Bob hadn't made such a row already," I said. "If he'd been fairly quiet, it would be all right; but a sudden stoppage of a row like that can't help being noticed. Orford'll miss him in two minutes as things are."

"Yes, it'll be like Niagara stopping all of a sudden," said Hoppy. "You're bound to notice something queer when that happens. No, it won't do; we must think of something else."

Next morning our disgust with Roberts increased. To take it out of Orford, he tried all sorts of stupid tricks; whistled, sang, and finally got up the big chimney while Orford wasn't looking.

"He's done it now," said Hoppy to me. "The chaps'll get quiet, and Orford'll wonder what has happened, and then catch him."

It turned out precisely as my friend had prophesied. As soon as the chaps saw what Bob had done, they instinctively grew silent, and Orford at once spotted something queer. He looked round and missed Roberts. For some time he was puzzled, but it wasn't long before he saw his feet sticking down, and then he was *really* angry. He lugged Bob out, feet first, and looked as if he'd half kill him on the spot; but then he pulled himself together and simply told Bob to come to his room at the end of the hour. "Serve him right, too," whispered Hoppy to me; "I hope he leathers him till he can't stand."

At the end of the hour we all waited about, while Bob, a bit frightened this time, followed Orford to his rooms. Hoppy, as he told me, intended to follow up Orford's physical correction with some sound advice, striking while the iron was hot. But things seemed to go awry. After about two minutes the door opened, and there emerged, not Bob, but Orford, who, with the speed of a 'Varsity miler, rushed off in the direction of Vernon's rooms. For ten minutes we waited for his return, but he came not. At the end of that time, Bob, smiling and unscathed, came out of durance.

"What *is* up?" said Hoppy.

"Why, I suppose he's forgotten all about it," answered Roberts.

"About what?"

"Why, about whacking me."

"Rot!" cried Hoppy.

"Listen, then," said Bob. "When I got into his room, he talked to me very nicely; said: 'Well, old chap, that was hardly good form, you know,' and so on; and then he looked round for something to lick me with. Of course, there was nothing but a strap, or an umbrella, or something of that kind. So, after feeling the strap a moment, he said: 'Stay as you are, old man, just a minute; I can get something much better than that.' And off he ran to get a cane."

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"It wasn't long before he saw his feet sticking down."

"Yes, we saw him going off to Vernon's. Was that what it was for?"

"I suppose so; and now I suppose he's forgotten all about it. Anyhow, he only told me to stay a minute, and I've stayed ten. I shan't wait another second."

"You ought to," said Hoppy.

"What on earth for?"

"Because it's sneakish to take advantage of a mere fit of forgetfulness."

"Bosh! Am I to hang about for a week until he turns up, and then remind him that he's got to whack me?"

"You ought to," replied the uncompro-

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mising Hoppy; but Roberts, too astonished to utter a word, went off without replying.

"It's all up now," said Hoppy sadly to me, as he watched Roberts disappear round the corner. "I had thought Orford would squash Bob himself, but he's plainly too slack and forgetful for anything. We shall have to manage it ourselves, I fear. There's only one thing to be done that I can see," he proceeded after a pause.

"What's that?" I asked rather hopelessly; for what with Orford's forgetfulness and Roberts's want of conscience, to say nothing of Hoppy's recently developed scheme for "artistic" ragging, I saw hardly a gleam of light on the horizon.

"Why," he replied, "we must manage to have Roberts moved up into a higher form."

"How *can* we get that done?" I cried.

"We must get Orford to do it, on the ground that Bob is too far-advanced for the rest of us."

"But he isn't; we were both above him last term, and this term no one knows who's top and who's last."

"Never mind; Orford forgets so easily that we shall soon persuade him that Roberts has been miles ahead of the rest, and that it's unjust both to him and to us to keep him down."

"But look here," I objected, "this is all very well; Bob will be in Vernon's form, and he'll have to work *there*——"

"Precisely; serve him right, too."

"And we shall never get above him again."

"Sufficient unto the day——" said Hopkins. "The great thing is to get rid of him; up or down, it makes no difference. He's like a pill in your mouth. Never you fear; when we want to, we'll get above him. One thing's certain—we *can't* stand him in our form, and out of it he goes, either up or down."

At this moment we saw Orford leisurely strolling across from Vernon's, with his hands in his pockets, his pipe in his mouth, and a cap (probably not his own) poised in unstable equilibrium on the back of his head. He held no cane; it was obvious therefore that Roberts was right, and that he had forgotten, as usual, all about his errand to Vernon. How *could* such a man expect to succeed as a master? We waited till he had got into his room, and then we went across and knocked.

"Come in!" cried a voice, and we entered, to see Orford with his feet on the mantelpiece, his pipe still in his mouth, and a magazine in his hand. He obviously didn't want us, but he was nothing if not jolly.

"Well," he said kindly, "what is it you want? Sit down, Hoppy, old man" (he wasn't the man to say Hopkins) "and you too, Monty."

We sat down accordingly, and Hoppy broached the subject we had come about.

"We've come to talk to you about Roberts, sir," he said.

"Roberts! Why, of course, by Jingo, I'd forgotten! I ought to have whacked him, and I suppose you two have come to remind me of it?"

"We're not such sneaks as that, sir," answered Hoppy.

"No, of course. Well, it's rough on me, though. Roberts certainly deserves a licking, and if I'd remembered by myself, I should have given it him, too. But now I hardly like to; I should certainly never have remembered but for you. Well, better luck next time," he added philosophically, evidently reflecting that his chance would soon come. But Hoppy held him to the point.

"That's just it, sir. The fact is, Roberts is too good for the form, sir, and that's why he rags."

"Too good! A nice form it would be if he were too good for it!"

"He's too advanced, sir; he ought to be promoted."

"I hadn't noticed he was any better than the rest of you," said Mr. Orford.

"Oh, he is, sir. He's awfully good at Latin, you know, and in mathematics he's a regular toff. He knows he can be top without any trouble, and that's why he thinks he can fool about. But it's bad for the other chaps, sir, don't you see? *We* aren't so advanced, and we should like to be getting on. Don't you think, sir, you could have him put up?"

"Who takes the form above?"

"Mr. Vernon."

"Well, I'll see whether it can't be managed. Mr. Vernon may not want him; but still, if he's so much better than the rest of you, it's only fair he should be shoved up. I'll try to manage it."

"Thank you, sir," said Hoppy; and after a few more words on ordinary matters, Blues and the like, out we marched. "We've settled Roberts's hash for him," said my friend, when we were well outside. "He'll have to work like a trooper with Vernon, and he won't get a chance of fooling for the next few years."

"No," I answered; "and besides, with him safely out of the way we shall be able to

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have a quiet and gentle course of artistic fooling with Orford for as long as we like."

"Just so," replied Hoppy. "I wonder what Bob'll say if ever he finds out who managed his promotion."

"Don't much care what he says," I rejoined; "but still, we'd better not tell him."

"No, certainly not."

Next morning, accordingly, Roberts was not in our form, and we proceeded, untrammelled by his objectionable presence, to carry into action our scheme of carefully regulated disorder. We were in no hurry to

"'There's only one thing to be done.'"

start a *regular* row; with months before us, why should we lay it on thick on the very first day?

Five minutes before the usual time for dismissal, Orford called us round the desk. We wondered what could be up, but we soon saw by his fidgetiness that he wanted to make a speech. He was always a bit nervous when on the oratorical tack. He moved his hands about uneasily, and seemed as if he couldn't find his pockets with them, while as for his feet, he twisted and untwisted one about the other. But he hadn't talked half a minute before we forgot all about the manner in the matter—it was too painful altogether.

"Well, you fellows," he said, "I'm awfully grateful to you all for the really decent way you've treated me these few weeks. I shall always remember it, I shall indeed. It's true you've fooled a little, and if I'd been staying long, I should have had to screw you up a bit. But as it was only to be for a month"—here Hoppy, thinking of all his lost opportunities, groaned aloud—"I didn't much mind what you did within limits. But now good-bye. I'll just shake hands with you all round." We *were* sorry to lose him, I can tell you—he'd been a regular friend to all of us; but we should have been sorrier still if we'd known what was to happen afterwards.

"If I'd known," muttered Hoppy under his breath, "Roberts wouldn't have been a patch on me." He was obviously deeply grieved for his lost opportunities. As for pride in his artistic ideas, it had vanished like the morning cloud. He looked at Orford more in sorrow than in anger. He couldn't blame him for deception; but still it was hard, very hard. It turned out that Orford had only come for a few weeks until the *real* new man could make arrangements. When the new man *did* come, he turned out a regular Tartar—worse, if possible, than Vernon himself. We didn't get five minutes fooling, all told, in the first year. You looked at that man, and *he* looked at you, and you said: "No, thank you: I won't try it on with him." So all that Hoppy got by his artistic methods was that instead of a roaring time for a month, we had a time that was only a very little better than work.

"What annoys me most," he said as we walked out together, "is that Bob has proved right. Accidentally, of course, for I was right in principle; but still it's annoying."

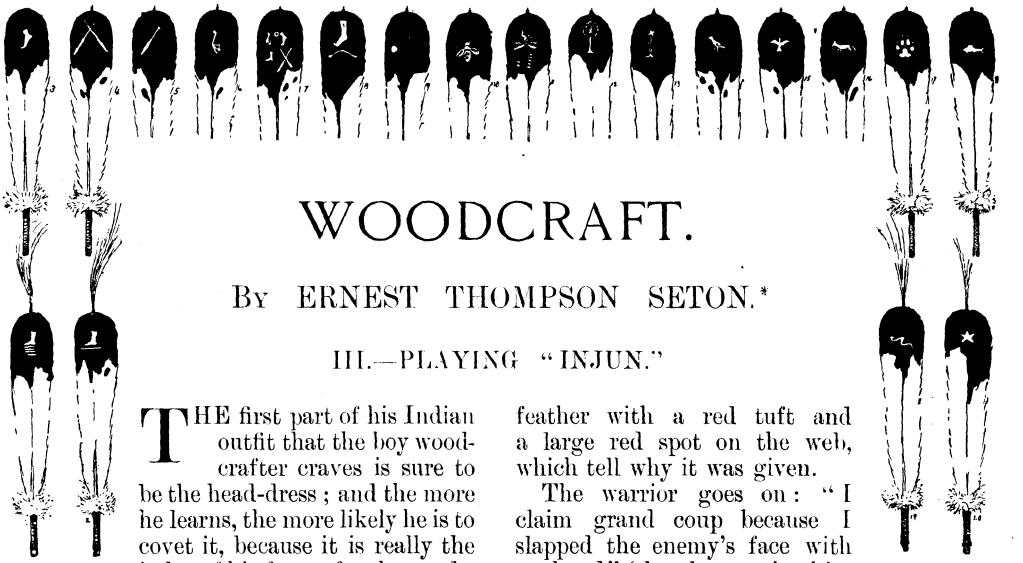
"Worse than that," I said, "you've shoved him up a form for nothing, and we shall be years catching him up again."

But it wasn't quite so bad as that. At dinner we met Bob, and learned he hadn't been promoted, after all. Orford had forgotten that, too. Bob had merely stayed away for fear Orford should remember he owed him a whacking.

Later Hoppy said to me: "Mind, I don't own I've been wrong, and I'm certain Roberts wasn't right; but henceforward, whenever we find a master who's worth fooling at all, understand that we fool him well."

I agreed; but what with the new man and what with Vernon, we had precious few chances of putting the theory into practice.

THE ROSE OF YESTERDAY



WOODCRAFT.

By ERNEST THOMPSON SETON.*

III.—PLAYING "INJUN."

THE first part of his Indian outfit that the boy woodcrafter craves is sure to be the head-dress; and the more he learns, the more likely he is to covet it, because it is really the index of his fitness for the woods.

The typical Indian is always shown with a war-bonnet, or war-cap, of eagle-feathers. Everyone is familiar with the look of this head-dress, but I find that few know its meaning or why the Indian glories in it so.

In the days when the red man was unchanged by white men's ways, every feather in the brave's head-dress was awarded to him by the Grand Council for some great deed, usually in warfare. Hence the expression, "a feather in his cap." These deeds are now called *coups* (pronounced *coos*), and when of exceptional valour they were *grand coups*, and the eagle's feather had a tuft of horsehair, or down, fastened on its top. Not only was each feather bestowed for some exploit, but there were also ways of marking the feathers so as to show the kind of deed.

Old plainsmen give an exciting picture in Indian life after the return of a successful war-party. All assemble in the Grand Council lodge of the village. First the leader of the party stands up, holding in his hands or having near him the scalps or other trophies he has taken, and says in a loud voice—

"Great Chief and Council of my Nation, I claim a grand coup because I went alone into the enemy's camp and learned about their plans; and when I came away, I met one of them and killed him within his own camp."

Then, if all the witnesses grunt and say: "*Hu!*" or "*How! How!*" ("So—it is so"), the Council award the warrior an eagle-feather with a red tuft and a large red spot on the web, which tell why it was given.

The warrior goes on: "I claim grand coup because I slapped the enemy's face with my hand" (thereby warning him and increasing his own risk) "before I killed him with my knife."

A loud chorus of "*How! How! How!*" from the others sustains him, and he is awarded another grand coup.

"I claim grand coup because I captured his horse while two of his friends were watching."

Here, perhaps, there are murmurs of dissent from the witnesses; another man claims that he also had a hand in it. There is a dispute, and maybe both are awarded a coup, but neither gets grand coup. The feathers are marked with a horseshoe, but without a red tuft.

The killing of one enemy might (according to Mallery) confer feathers on four different men—the first, second, and third to strike him, and the one who took his scalp.

After the chief, each of the warriors comes forward in turn and claims, and is awarded, his due honours, to be worn ever afterwards on State occasions. All awards are made, and all disputes settled, by the Council, and no man would dream of being so foolish as to wear an honour that had not been conferred by them, or in any way to dispute their ruling.

In the light of this we see new interest attach to the head-dress of some famous warrior of the West when he is shown with a circle of tufted feathers around his head, and then added to that a tail of one hundred or more reaching to the ground or trailing behind him. We know that, like the rows of medals on an old soldier's breast, they are the record of wonderful past achievements, that every one of them was won, perhaps, at the risk of his life. What wonder is it that

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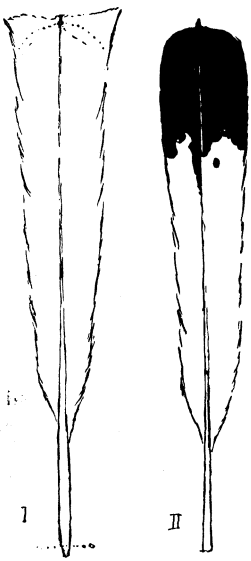
travellers on the plains to-day tell us that the Indian values his head-dress above all things else? He would usually prefer to part with his ponies and his wife before he will give up that array of eagle-plumes, the only tangible record that he has of whatever was heroic in his past.



We do not wish our boys playing "Injun" to do any of the dreadful things that might win a feather for the ferocious Sioux brave, but there are many achievements in woodcraft that may well take their place, and the boy's attainments can be shown exactly by his head-dress. It would be easy to give a list of one hundred grand coups that might claim feathers, but for the present I shall give only eleven, and it is understood that these are for boys under fourteen. The symbol of the feat is to be painted on the web of the feather in red or yellow paint:—

1. Walk three and a half measured miles in one hour (heel and toe) to count coup; or four miles for grand coup.

2. Walk one mile in fourteen minutes for coup; in thirteen minutes for grand coup.

3. Run one hundred yards in twelve and a half seconds for coup; do it in twelve seconds for grand coup.

4. Row (single sculls) one mile, still water, in fifteen minutes for coup; in twelve minutes for grand coup.

5. Paddle (single) one mile, still water, in twenty minutes for coup; in fifteen minutes for grand coup.

6. Swim one hundred yards, still water, in two and a half minutes to count coup; or two hundred yards in five minutes to count grand coup.

7. Go four hundred yards in six minutes; swimming one hundred, running one hundred, rowing one hundred, and walking one hundred (in any order) for coup; do it in five minutes for grand coup.

8. Running broad jump; twelve feet for coup; fourteen feet for grand coup.

9. Throw a regulation four and a half ounce baseball fifty yards for coup; sixty-five yards for grand coup.

10. Come to camp through strange woods from a point one mile off in twenty minutes for coup; in fifteen minutes for grand coup.

11. Light ten camp-fires in succession with ten matches, all at different places, all with stuff found in the woods by the boy himself, one at least to be on a wet day. If all ten are done on wet days, or if he does twenty, of which two are on wet days, it counts grand coup.

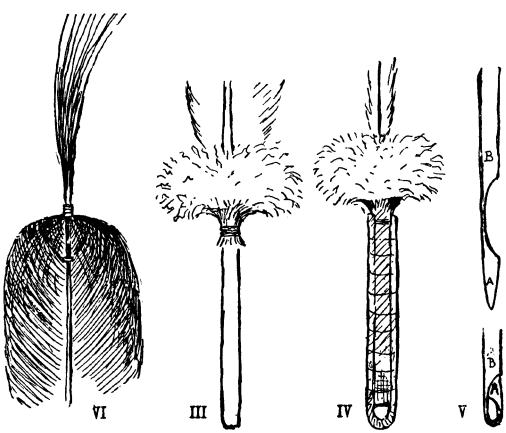
I shall tell you about some other coups later.

A boy cannot reckon both coup and grand coup of the same kind.

There is also a "bad coup" to be counted. This is a "black feather" worn in front. It is a disgrace, and is to be imposed by the Council only for very grave offences. The high crimes of a woodcrafter are—

1. Cheating.
2. Killing a song-bird.
3. Setting out wild-fire.
4. Breaking the game-laws.
5. Rebelling.
6. Wearing an honour not conferred by the Council.

The boy with the black feather cannot enter into the Council or into any of the games, but he can be made to work until he has won his way back to favour and wiped out his disgrace. The extreme punishment



would be to destroy the culprit's weapons and badges and expel him from the tribe.

In a small tribe, all the members in good standing form the Council; in a large one, only the chiefs or those who have won at

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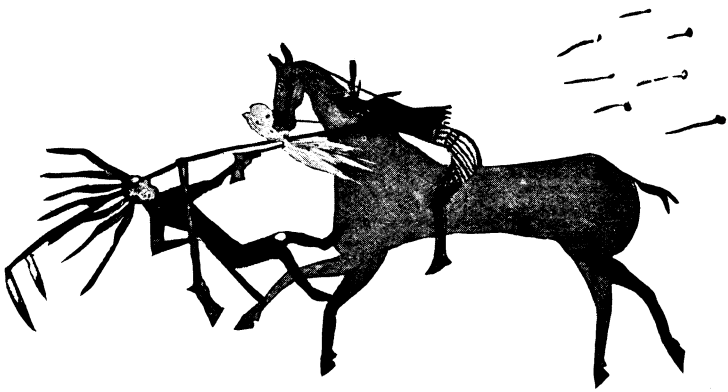


WHITE SWAN WINNING HIS FIRST GRAND COUP.

Drawn by the Crow warrior himself. Armed only with a lance, he attacks a famous Sioux chief, who had many grand coups and who was armed with a rifle and a revolver. The seven revolver shots are shown passing by White Swan as he thrusts his lance into the enemy's eye and through his head.

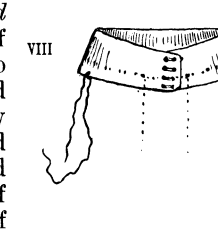
least twenty coups. It is left to the Council to elect the Great Chief.

A new-comer is always supposed to do some feat at once to prove his fitness to be a member of the tribe.

Most boys will ask how the head-dress is made. Fortunately we can make it without either eagle's feathers or buckskin. I should be sorry to write anything that would increase the demand for these things and lead to yet more destructive hunting after the creatures that produce them. I find that all feather-dealers in our large cities keep stocks of quill-feathers from white turkeys and geese. These are very cheap, and can readily be made into beautiful eagle-plumes. The turkey-feathers are the better general shape, but the goose-feathers are stronger. The other things necessary are some tan-coloured calf or sheepskin—these answer as well as buckskin—some strong linen thread, shoemaker's wax, scarlet flannel, white horsehair dyed scarlet, white down from a goose, turkey, or other domestic bird, red or yellow oil-paint, and a bottle of black waterproof American drawing-ink. A turkey-tail feather must be trimmed to eagle shape by cutting along the dotted lines, leaving the little point of the mid-rib (Fig. I.). Then cut off the point of the quill squarely, aiming to make the feathers of uniform size and shape. Next lay the feathers smoothly on a flat board, with a light weight on the quill end to steady it, and neatly and lightly paint the upper third with black or dark brown waterproof ink on the upper side, taking care not to break the web; set this away to dry (Fig. II.). If the ink will not "take," paint the feather first with washing soda dissolved in water, or, better still, add a little ox-gall. Give it another coat of ink if the first dries too light. This tinting of the tip can be done by dyeing, but it is very difficult to get the feathers in good shape again after boiling them; also, in dyeing, it is harder to make the line of colour irregular in imitation of the eagle plume. Rub a little shoemaker's wax on the quill, select enough of the white down to make a ruff as in Fig. III., and lash it on with a fine thread well waxed. Cut a strip of leather about five inches long and a quarter of an inch wide; lash this with waxed thread on to the quill, so as to leave a loop at the lower end (Fig. IV.), the hole through to be in the same line as the web of the feather. If the quill happens to be very long, this loop can be made by cutting it so (Fig. V.), then doubling the point A up into the barrel of the quill B. Cover the quill up to the down with red flannel, sewed on with the seam behind. This makes a *coup* feather.

VII

VIII



The dots show where the tail band is fastened on, and the tie or chin thongs.

To make a *grand coup*, take a wisp of red horsehair, five to nine inches long, and with, perhaps, forty or fifty hairs in it, and lash this with waxed thread or a piece of wax to the point of the mid-rib of the *coup* feather. Then with a needle put one fine lashing half an inch lower down on the mid-rib (Fig. VI.).

The body of the bonnet is made either as a band (Fig. VII.) or as a skull-cap of leather, keeping the rough side out, or if the smooth side shows, it should be roughened with sandpaper. The band should be three inches wide and twenty-four inches long, to allow for overlap. It is fastened at the back with a lace that can be adjusted to fit. One inch from the bottom should be a row of holes in pairs, the first of each pair about one inch from the first of the next pair (Fig. VIII.), the

holes big enough to take a stout string or a thin leather lace, that comes out of each hole and passes through the loop at the lower end of the feathers and in at the next nearest hole.

The feathers are held upright and the proper distance apart by a stout thread, a fine thong, or a strip of sinew that passes around through a hole in the mid-rib of each plume about six inches from the bottom.

It takes twenty to twenty-five eagle plumes to go around the head, or it may be well to fix the number at twenty for our Indians, and no brave can be a chief until after he has won the twenty and begun on the tail. The tail foundation is a long strip of leather about two inches wide, with holes down the middle for the thong, much like those on the head-band, but usually farther apart, especially at the lower end. It is fastened into the back of the head-band with a lace, as shown in Fig. VIII. The tie-string of the tail feathers is like that of those on the head.

This is the typical war-cap or war-bonnet. All sorts of variations are made, each tribe adding its own features. This is the simplest form and the best for our purpose—the one that shall tally for us the accomplishments of our boy woodcrafter—that shall show just what he has done.

I remember vividly a scene I once witnessed years ago in the West, when my attention was strongly directed to the significance of the war-bonnet. I was living among a certain tribe of Indians, and one day they were subjected to a petty indignity by a well-meaning, ill-advised missionary. Two regiments of United States Cavalry were camped near, and so, being within the letter of the law, he also had power to enforce it. But this occurrence was the last of a long series of foolish, small attacks on their harmless customs, and it roused the Indians, especially the younger ones, to the point of rebellion.

A Grand Council was called. A warrior got up and made a strong, logical appeal to their manhood—a tremendously stirring speech. He worked them all up, and they were ready to go on the warpath, with him to lead them. I felt that my scalp was in serious danger, for an outburst seemed at hand.

But now there arose a big, square-jawed man, who had smoked in silence. He made a very short speech. It was full of plain, good sense. He told them what he knew about the United States Army—how superior it was to all the Indian tribes put together, how hopeless it was to fight it—and urged them to give up the foolish notion of the warpath. His speech would not compare with that of the other. He had neither the fire nor the words—he had not even the popular sympathy, and yet he quelled the disturbance in his few sentences. And as I looked, there dawned upon me the reason for his power. While the gifted orator of the big words had in his hair a single untufted eagle-feather, the other—the man with the square jaw—had eagle-feathers all around his head and trailing down his back and two feet on the ground behind him, and every one of them with a bright-red tuft of horsehair at its top, and I knew then that I was listening to the voice of Plenty-Coups, the most famous chief on the Upper Missouri, and I realised how a few words from the man of deeds will go further than all the stirring speeches of one who has no record of prowess to back up his threats and fiery denunciations.

So, too, our boy woodcrafter who has won a war-bonnet of a hundred plumes has a proud trophy that is evidence to all the camp of what he has done and can do.

TEEPEES.

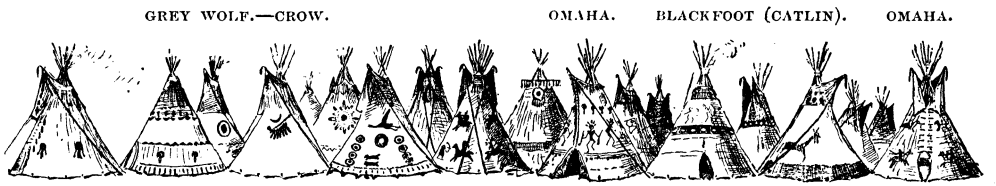
MANY famous campers have said that the Indian teepee is the best-known movable home. It is roomy, self-ventilating, cannot blow down, and is the only tent that admits of a fire inside.

Then why is it not everywhere used? Because of the difficulty of the poles. If on the prairie, you must carry your poles. If in the woods, you must cut them at each camp.

General Sibley, the famous Indian fighter, invented a teepee with a single pole, and this is still used by the United States Army. But it will not do for us. Its one pole is made in part of iron, and is very cumbersome as well as costly. The "Sibley" is ugly, too, compared with the real teepee, and as we are "playing Injun," not soldier, we shall stick to the famous and picturesque old teepee of the real Buffalo Indians.

In the "Buffalo days" this teepee was made of buffalo-skin; now it is made of some sort of canvas or cotton, but it is decorated much in the old style.

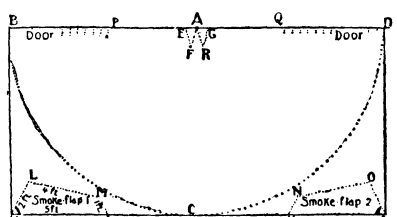
I tried to get an extra fine one made by the Indians especially as a model for our boys, but I found this no easy matter. I



could not go among the Red folk and order it as in a department store.

At length I solved the difficulty by buying one ready-made from Thunder Bull, a chief of the Cheyennes.

It appears at the left end of the illustration on this page. This is a twenty-foot teepee and is large enough for ten boys to live in. A large one is easier to keep clear of smoke, but most boys will prefer a smaller one, as it is much handier, cheaper, and easier to make. I shall therefore give the working plan of a ten-foot teepee of the simplest form, the raw material of which can be bought new for less than a pound.



I.—PATTERN FOR A SIMPLE 10-FOOT TEEPEE.

It requires twenty-two square yards of six or eight ounce duck, heavy unbleached muslin or Canton flannel (the wider the better, as that saves labour in making up), which costs about twelve shillings; one hundred feet of three-sixteenth-inch clothes-line, and string for sewing rope-ends.

Of course, one can often pick up second-hand materials that are quite good and cost next to nothing. An old wagon-cover, or two or three old sheets, will make the teepee, and even if they are patched, it is all right; the Indian teepees are often mended where bullets and arrows have gone through them. Scraps of rope, if not rotted, will work in well enough.

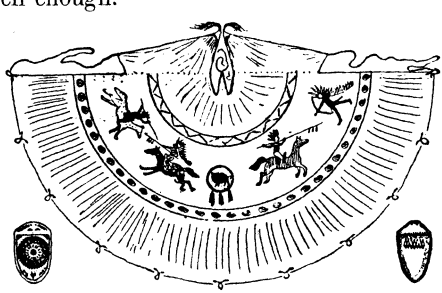
Suppose you have new material to deal with. Get it machine-run together twenty feet long and ten feet wide. Lay this down perfectly flat (Fig. I.). On a peg or nail at A in the middle of the long side put a ten-foot cord loosely, and then with a burnt stick in a loop at the other end draw the half-circle BCD. Now mark out the two little triangles at A. AE is six inches, AF and EF each one foot; the other triangle, ARG, is the same size. Cut the canvas along these dotted lines. From the scraps left over cut two pieces for smoke-flaps as shown. On the long corner of each (H in No. 1, I in No. 2) a small three-cornered piece should be sewed, to make a pocket for the end of the pole.

Now sew the smoke-flaps to the cover so that ML of No. 1 is neatly fitted to PE, and NO of No. 2 to QG.

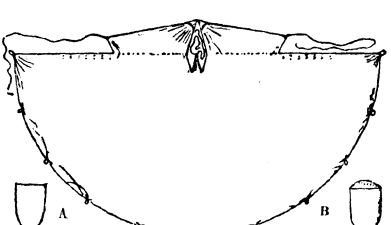
Two inches from the edge BP make a double row of holes; each hole is one and-a-half inches from its mate, and each pair is five inches from the next pair, except at the two-foot space marked "door," where no holes are needed.

The holes on the other side, QD, must exactly fit on these.

At A fasten very strongly a four-foot rope by the middle. Fasten the end of a ten-foot cord to J and another to K; hem a rope all along in the bottom, BCD. Cut twelve pieces of rope each about fifteen inches long,



II.—DECORATION OF A TEEPEE. TWO EXAMPLES OF DOORS.



III.—COMPLETE TEEPEE COVER, UNORNAMENTED. A—FRAME FOR DOOR; B—DOOR COMPLETE.

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fasten one firmly to the canvas at B, another at the point D, and the rest at regular distances to the hem-rope along the edge between, for peg-loops. The teepee cover is now made.

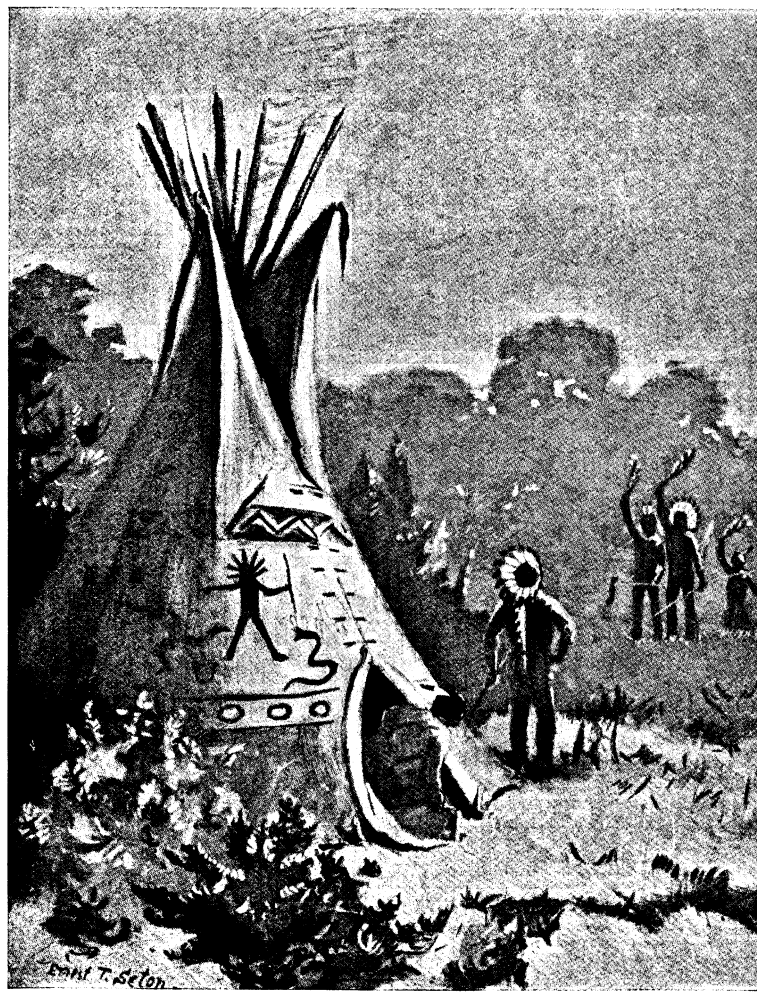
For the door (some never use one) take a limber sapling three-quarters of an inch thick and five and a half feet long, also one twenty-two inches long. Bend the long one into a horseshoe and fasten the short one across the ends (A in Fig. III.). On this stretch canvas, leaving a flap at the top, in the middle of which two small holes are made (B, Fig. III.) so as to hang the door on a lacing-pin. Nine of these lacing-pins are needed. They are of smooth, round, straight, hard wood, a foot long and a quarter of an inch thick. Their way of skewering the two edges together is seen in the Omaha teepee in our illustration.

Twelve poles also are needed. They should be as straight and smooth as possible; crooked, rough poles are signs of a bad housekeeper—a squaw is known by her teepee-poles. They should be thirteen or fourteen feet long, and about one and a half inches thick at the top. Two are for the smoke-vent—they may be more slender than the others. Last of all, make a dozen stout, short pegs about fifteen inches long and about one and a half inches thick. Now all the necessary parts of the teepee are made, and it appears as in Fig. III.

But no real Indian would live in a teepee which was not decorated in some way, and it is well to begin the adorning while the cover is flat on the ground. From the centre A, at seven feet distance, draw a circle; draw another at six and a half feet, another at three feet, and another at two and a half feet (Fig. II.). Make the lines any colour you like; put a row of spots or zigzags in each of the six-inch bands; then on the side, midway between A and C, draw a one-foot circle.

In the old days every Indian had a coat-of-arms, or "totem," and this properly appeared on his tent. This little circle is a good place to paint your totem. The spaces at each side can be covered with figures showing the owner's adventures, using flat colours with black outlines, but without shading. Very thin oil colours are best.

On the teepee in the picture "Visitors in Camp" is a sample of Indian style of painting. A boy went to a spring for a pail of water,



VISITORS IN THE BOYS' CAMP HOLDING UP BRANCHES, A SIGNAL OF FRIENDSHIP.

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but was so scared by a snake that he did not get over it for three days (suns). The owner of the teepee came to the rescue. This teepee was made of twenty-seven yards of Canton flannel and a few pennyworths of three-sixteenths of an inch grass-rope, the whole costing under nine shillings, not including labour or paints.

The pictures are usually about the middle of the wall, because when too high they get smoked, and when too low they get dirty.

In addition to being painted, the teepee is usually decorated with eagle-feathers, tufts of horsehair, beadwork, etc. In Fig. II. the owner's crest, a blue buffalo, is shown in the small circle, and from that are three tufts for tails. On the teepees in the head-band on page 713 are shown many different styles of decoration, and all of them were from real teepees. Scalp-locks were also used, although horsetails are more often seen now.

This is how the Indian tent is put up: Tie three poles together at a point about two feet higher than the canvas, spread them out in a tripod the right distance apart, then lay the other poles (except three, including the two slender ones) in the angles, their lower ends forming the proper circle. Bind them all with a rope, letting its end hang down inside for an anchor. Now fasten the two ropes at A to the stout pole left over at a point ten feet up. Raise this into its place, and the teepee cover with it, opposite where the door is to be. Carry the two wings of the tent around till they overlap, and fasten together with the lacing-pins. Put the end of a vent-pole in each of the vent-flap pockets, outside of the teepee. Peg down the edges of the canvas at each loop if a storm is coming, otherwise a few will do. Hang the door on a convenient lacing-pin. Drive a stout stake inside the teepee, tie the anchor-rope to this, and the teepee is ready for weather. In the centre dig a hole eighteen inches wide and six inches deep, for the fire.

The fire is the great advantage of the teepee, and the smoke the great disadvantage; but experience will show how to manage this. Keep the smoke-vent swung down wind, or at least quartering down. Sometimes you must leave the door a little open or raise the bottom of the teepee cover a little on the windward side. If this makes too much draught on your back, stretch a piece of canvas between two or three of the poles inside the teepee, in front of the opening made and reaching to the ground. The draught will go up behind this.

By these tricks you can make the vent draw the smoke. But, after all, the main thing is to use only the best and dryest of woods. This makes a clear fire. There will always be more or less smoke seven or eight feet up, but it worries no one there and keeps the mosquitoes away.

You should always be ready for a storm overnight. You must study the wind continually, and be weatherwise—that is, a woodcrafter—if you are to make a success of the teepee.

And remember this: the Indians did not look for hardships. They took care of their health so as to withstand hardship when it came, but they made themselves as comfortable as possible. They never slept on the ground if they could help it. Catlin tells us of the beautiful four-post beds the Mandans used to make in their lodges. The Blackfeet make neat beds of willow rods carefully peeled, and the Eastern Indians cut piles of pine and fur branches to keep them off the ground.

Another thing of importance: Catlin says that the real wild Indians were cleanly. They became filthy when half civilised. Cleanliness around the camp should be a law. When I camp, even in the Rockies, I aim to leave the ground as undefiled as when I came. I always dig a hole, or several if need be, and say: "Now, boys, I want all tins and rubbish put here and buried. I want this place left as clean as we found it." This may be a matter of sentiment in the Western mountains, but in the woods near home you will find you will win many friends if you enforce the law of cleanliness.

Near the end of the row on page 713 is Grey Wolf's teepee. I came across this on the Upper Missouri in 1897. It was the most brilliant affair I ever saw on the Plains, for on the bright red ground of the canvas were his totems and medicine, in yellow, blue, green, and black. The day I sketched it a company of United States soldiers, under orders, had forcibly taken away his two children "to send them to school, according to law"; so Grey Wolf was going off at once without pitching his tent. His little daughter, "the Fawn," looked at me with fear, thinking I was coming to drag her off to school. I coaxed her, then gave her a coin. She smiled, because she knew it would buy sweetmeats.

Then I said: "Little Fawn, run and tell your father that I am his friend, and I want to see his great red teepee."

The Fawn came back and said: "My father hates you."

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PLAYING "INJUN."

"Tell your mother I will pay her if she will put up the teepee."

The Fawn went to her mother, and improving my offer told her that "that white man will give much money to see the red teepee up."

The squaw looked out. I held up a dollar and got only a sour look, but another squaw appeared. After some haggling they agreed to put up the teepee for twelve shillings. The poles were already standing. They unrolled the great cloth and deftly put it up in less than twenty minutes, but did not try to put down the anchor-rope, as the ground was too hard to drive a stake into.

My sketch was half finished when the elder woman called the younger and pointed westward. They chattered together a moment, and then proceeded to take down the teepee. I objected. They pointed angrily towards the west and went on. I protested that I had paid for the right to make the sketch; but in spite of me the younger squaw scrambled like a monkey up the front pole, drew the lacing-pins, and the teepee was down and rolled up in ten minutes.

I could not understand the pointing to the west, but five minutes after the teepee was down a dark spot appeared; this became a cloud, and in a short time we were in the midst of a wind-storm that threw down all teepees that were without the anchor-rope, and certainly the red teepee would have been one of those to suffer but for the sight and foresight of the old Indian woman.

The Seton Indians.

I HAVE returned from a visit to one of a band of Seton Indians—the first band to be formed, so far as I know. It is in New Jersey, among the boys of a Fresh Air Home. The lady principal wrote to me some time ago to tell me that she would like to form an Indian tribe of woodcrafters. I wrote a letter showing my interest. They wrote back, inviting me to go out. I accepted, and learned from her that the boys had a little surprise in store for me. Not to be outdone, I prepared something for them. I made a teepee on the most approved Indian style, painted, and with scalp-locks; then notified the lady to have the poles the proper size duly prepared, and went out with the teepee, and outfit of bows and arrows.

I was met at the station by the lady in charge and driven two miles back into the woods; but there were no children when we arrived. We got out of the carriage, and the lady suggested that we walk down a winding path, that possibly the children might be there. We went along, but still saw nothing of the children. "This is strange," said she; "possibly if you gave a war-whoop, they might answer." So I let out a real good Westerner, and instantly there was a reply from every bush, rock, and tree around us. Not a place of hiding but evidently concealed some bloodthirsty Indian who was yelling away at the pitch of his voice. They were on all sides, but I saw not one. I was naturally and properly scared into fits. The lady reassured me—said that the danger had been reduced to a minimum. After the yelling had gone on about a minute, or possibly two, it ceased, and an invisible chorus of children sang: "We are the Lords of the Forest" from "The Wild Animal Play." Then, as this

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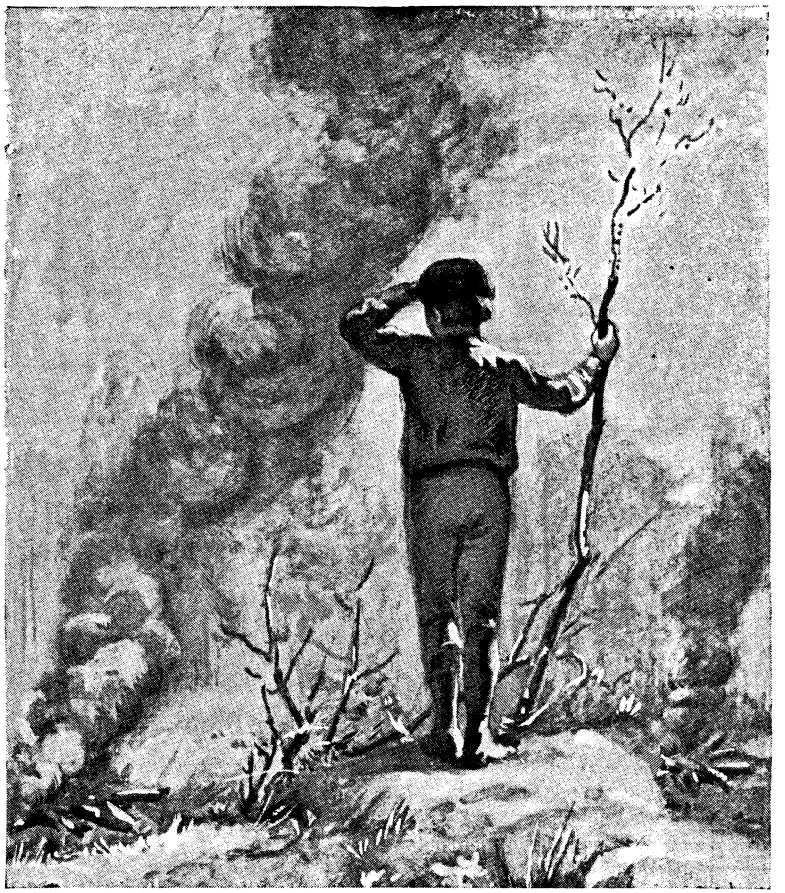

"MAKE TWO SMOKE FIRES."

died away, a number of painted Indians appeared trotting down the trail—another bad scare for me. As they came up they were introduced by the lady principal. The first was Deerfoot, the chief. The others were Wahb, Lobo, Bluejay, Little Beaver, and so on. The chief stood out and, with appropriate gestures, recited a poem of welcome. When this was finished, there was more war-whooping, and the rest of the band, nearly fifty of them, appeared on all sides from the places of hiding. After this we had a general ramble through the woods, and it was a great pleasure to see how much of woodcraft these boys are picking up and how eager they were to go on with it. It surprised me thoroughly.

Meantime I got ready to pay them back. The principal had the teepee-poles conveyed to a quiet place by a spring in the woods. I carried the teepee down and, without telling them just what was going to happen, got them all to work preparing the ground Then we raised the teepee cover, and in twenty minutes it was blazing in the sun, scalp-locks and all. A fire was lighted in the middle, smoke-vents adjusted, and some twenty boys crowded in. I think they were the happiest lot I ever saw, but they were very quiet. There was an air of tenseness about them and about everything. Their eyes were bright, nervously so. The luncheon-bell rang as we finished, but one and all declined to go to the luncheon. None of us had any appetite for eating. I was as bad as they. I felt like a galvanised man among such a crowd of devoted little woodcrafters.

The lady principal told me that this was to be the greatest day of their lives, and I felt as though it surely were one of mine. Some of them were shy at first, one or two seemed to avoid me, but before many hours we were all on terms of close friendship. I did all I could to please them, and they certainly were

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ready to be pleased. A little four-year-old dumb boy came to me after about an hour and held up his arms to be lifted. When I took the child up, he gravely patted me on the cheek to let me understand that I "would pass." The teepee really holds six or eight, but double that number crowded into it; and although it was an exceedingly hot day, they kept the fire going, and nothing would induce them to leave it or let it go out. We were all bathed in perspiration, but having a beautiful time.

A strange little child there, a thin, black-eyed, bright-eyed girl of the Polish type, showed at first her intention to let me severely alone. But after we had walked through the woods an hour, a little girl holding each of my hands, she apparently changed her mind. She rushed up, violently pushed away the bigger girl who had my left hand, took hold herself, and stayed right there. When we got into the teepee, one of the boys naturally got on each side of me, as I had turned the thing over to them, and they were now my hosts and I the guest of honour; but little Sarah sprang on the Indian who had taken her place, and he had to move out or have his face scratched; so she sat there and did her best to make me ignore the others. She is a bright child, but capricious. Last winter they had a little play: "Jack Frost and the Snow Fairy." She was decidedly the best of the lot to take the chief *rôle*. She learned her part well and quickly; but the day before the final rehearsal she decided that she would have nothing more to do with it. Neither threats nor coaxing could move her. She said she was done with it, and she was. They had to postpone the play and look about for another fairy.

The chief of the Indians is a tall boy—a natural leader. He was elected, of course; but there was no possibility of anyone else's taking the position from him. They wished to make me chief also, but this I declined. I said I would be the medicine man to come at times from far away. They must stick to their chief and always obey him. I then enlarged on the rules of the camp exactly on lines of what has already been printed, and the chief listened with the air of one who is not going to forget or let others forget.

The bows and arrows were the next cause of excitement. Among the warriors, Wahb promises really to be a naturalist. He is a clever boy, and, though much smaller than the chief and less of a leader, he caught on to the archery sooner and did better shooting than Deerfoot. Naturally this was galling to the chief of the tribe, who announced his intention of shooting till he could "lick everything in sight."

We all went into the teepee—that is, as many as could get in. Those who couldn't sat around outside, with one end of the cloth raised. I told them stories about Indians and animals until coming-away time. Right up to the finish the little girl clung to my left hand. She extracted a promise that I would come again as often as I could. At the end they each gathered bunches of ferns. Fifty bunches of ferns had I—as much as I could carry in my arms. I did not know what to do with them; but, of course, I had to bring them away. I carried them to New York; then got off the ferry with my arms full, distinctly embarrassed with my riches. I wondered what I should do with them; but when I landed in the street, I found myself surrounded by a mob of slum children. Two or three of them asked for flowers. I gave one of the bunches to each, and before five minutes I had given my fifty bouquets away—from fifty poor children in Jersey to fifty poor children in New York: which, after all, was the best way of placing them. Several of the children said "Thank you." The little Injuns, every one, evidently enjoyed the day to the fullest; but I am sure that, whatever they got out of it, I got far more.

Getting Lost in the Wilderness.

"Did you ever get lost in the woods?" I once asked a company of twenty campers. Some answered: "Yes, once or twice"; others said: "Many a time." Only two said: "No, never." Then I said, turning to the two: "I know that all the others here have had plenty of experience, and that you two are the tenderfeet, and never lived in the woods."

It is quite certain to come soon or late; if you go camping, you will get lost in the woods. You can avoid it for long by always *taking your bearings* and noting the landscape before leaving the camp, and this you should always do; but still you will get lost some time, and it is well to be ready for it by carrying matches, knife, and compass.

When you do miss your way, the first thing to remember is, like the Indian: "*You* are not lost; it is the *teepee* that is lost." It isn't serious. It cannot be unless you do something foolish.

The first and most natural thing to do is to get on a hill, up a tree, or other high

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look-out, and seek for some landmark near camp. You may be sure of this—you are not nearly so far from camp as you think you are.

If you see no landmark, look for the smoke of the fire. Shout from time to time, and wait; for though you have been away for hours, it is quite possible you are within earshot of your friends. If you happen to have a gun (contrary to rules), fire it off twice in quick succession on your high look-out; then wait and listen. Do this several times, and wait plenty long enough—perhaps an hour. If this brings no help, send up a distress signal—that is, make two smoke fires by smothering two bright fires with green leaves and rotten wood, and keep them at least fifty feet apart,

A RED INDIAN BRAVE.

or the wind will confuse them. Two shots or two smokes are usually understood to mean: "I am in trouble." Those in camp, on seeing this, should send up one smoke, which means: "Camp is here."

If you have a dog or a horse with you, you may depend upon it he can bring you out all right; but usually you will have to rely on yourself. The simplest plan, when there is fresh snow and no wind, is to follow your own track back. No matter how far around or how crooked it may be, it will certainly bring you out safely.

If you are sure of the general direction to the camp and determined to keep moving, leave a note pinned on a tree if you have paper; if not, write with charcoal on a piece of wood, and also make a good smoke, so that you can come back to this spot if you choose. But make certain that the fire cannot run, by clearing the ground around it and by banking it around with sods. And mark your course by breaking or cutting a twig every fifty feet. You can keep straight by the sun, the moon, or the stars; but when they are unseen, you must be guided by the compass. I do not believe much in guidance by what are called Nature's compass signs. It is usual to say, for example, that the north side of the tree has the most moss, or the south side the most limbs, etc. While these are true in general, there are so many exceptions that, when alarmed and in doubt as to which is north, one is not in a frame of mind to decide with certainty on such fine points.

If a strong west wind, for example, was blowing when you left camp, and has blown ever since, you can be pretty sure it is still a west wind; but the only safe and certain natural compass guides are the sun, moon, and stars.

The Pole or North Star, and the Great Beer (also called the Dipper and the Pointers), should be known to every boy as they are to every Indian. The Pointers always point out the Pole star. Of course, they go around it once in twenty-four hours, so this makes a kind of clock.

The stars, then, will enable you to keep straight if you travel. But thick woods, fog, or clouds are apt to come up, and without something to guide you, you are sure to go around in a circle.

Old woodsmen commonly follow down the streams. These are certain to bring you out somewhere; but the very worst travelling is along the edges of the streams, and they take you a long way around. All things considered, it is usually best to stay right where you are, especially if in a wild country where there is no chance of finding a farm-house. Make yourself comfortable for the night by gathering plenty of good wood while it is daylight, and building a wind screen on three sides, with the fire in front, and something to keep you off the ground. Do not worry, but keep up a good fire; and when day comes, renew your two smokes and wait.

I have been lost a number of times, but always got out without serious trouble because I kept cool. The worst losing I ever got was after I had been so long in the West that I qualified to act as a professional guide, and was engaged by a lot of Eastern farmers looking for land locations.

This was in the October of 1883, on the Upper Assiniboin. The main body of the

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farmers had remained behind. I had gone ahead with two of them. I took them over hundreds of miles of wild country. As we went northward, the country improved. We were travelling with oxen, and it was our custom to let them graze for two hours at noon. One warm day, while the oxen were feeding, we went in our shirt-sleeves to a distant butte that promised a look-out. We forgot about the lateness till the sun got low. Even then I could have got back to camp, but clouds came up and darkness fell quickly. Knowing the general direction, I kept on, and after half an hour's tramp we came to a cañon I had never seen before. I got out my compass and a match, and found that I had been circling, as one is sure to do in the dark. I corrected the course and led off again. After another brief turn, I struck another match and learned from the compass that I was again circling. This was discouraging, but with corrected course we again tramped. I was leading, and suddenly the dark ground ten feet ahead of me turned grey. I could not make it out, so went cautiously nearer. I lay down, reached forth, and then slowly made sure that we were on the edge of a steep precipice. I backed off and frankly told the men I did not know where we were. I got out my match-box and compass and found I had but one match left.

"Any of you got any matches?" I asked.

"No; left 'em all in our coats," was their answer.

"Well," said I, "I have one. Shall I use it to get a new course from the compass, or shall we make a fire and stay here till morning?"

All voted to camp for the night. There was now a cold rain. We groped into a hollow, where we got some dead wood, and by using our knives got some dry chips from the inside of a log. When all was ready, we gathered close around and I got out the one match. I was about to strike it, when the younger of the men said—

"Say, Seton, you are not a smoker; Jack is. Hadn't you better give him that match?"

There was sense in this. I have never in my life smoked. Jack was an old stager, and an adept with matches. I handed it to him. "*Rrrp—fizz!*"—and in a minute we had a fire.

With the help of the firelight we now found plenty of dead wood; we made three blazing fires side by side, and after an hour we removed the centre one, then raked away all the hot ashes, and all lay down together on the warm ground. When the morning came, the rain ceased. We stretched our stiffened limbs and made for camp. Yes, there it was, in plain view, two miles away across a fearful cañon. Three steps more on that gloomy night, and we should have been over the edge of that same cañon and dashed to the bottom.

AUTUMNAL.

SEE, the leaves are falling,
Summer's dream is over,
Gone beyond recalling—
Dead leaves lie above her.

Our dream, too, is dying
With the dying flowers—
See, the leaves are flying
Through the wind-swept bowers.

Summer birds have left us,
Our farewell forestalling
Ere the hour bereft us—
See, the leaves are falling.

ROSAMUND MARRIOTT WATSON.

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THE CARDINAL'S COMEDY.

By HAMILTON DRUMMOND.*

S his Eminence the Cardinal de Valdivia leaned back on the soft cushions of his coach, he fairly preened himself over the success of his diplomacy. His plan promised to run its course as smoothly to success as his own progress through the streets of Burgos, and if the byways of life through which it led him were as unsavoury as these same streets, the fault was the fault of the times rather than any of his. Besides, in all he purposed doing had he not the sanction of the law? Or if not exactly of the law, of that eminent jurist, Juan de la Vega, chief justiciary of the city of Burgos?

A casuist might draw a distinction between the law and its administrator, but in practice there was none. What Juan de la Vega approved, the law graciously approved also; and yet, soft as was his corner of the well-hung coach, Juan de la Vega was not altogether at ease. He differed from the Cardinal in this: his risk was the risk of the cat's paw, and he stood to win nothing but the doubtful asset of an ambitious Churchman's gratitude.

"You understand, your Eminence," said he, laying his hand as roughly as he dared on his companion's sleeve, "there must be no violence. We know the woman to be innocent, and the law——"

At the touch the Cardinal's pleasant vision of a grateful king vanished, and for a moment the smile on his smooth mask of a face gave place to a frown. Then he remembered that De la Vega still had his uses, and would have, until the drama in the prison to which they were going was played out to its end. At the thought, the unctuous suavity reasserted itself.

"Innocent of act, but not of knowledge," said he. "But no violence—oh, certainly not. The Countess has many friends at Court, and so—no violence. But I think we shall succeed without it. Every trade has its own trick of peculiar knowledge—a something that is not taught in the books. A Churchman must know human nature, heart and brains, but especially that of women. Oh, yes! We shall succeed, we shall succeed!"

"And yet, so far, she has been silent?"

"So far, so far," and this time there was no need to disguise the pucker of annoyance that darkened Valdivia's face. "That is the way of these cursed women. When you want them to be silent, they chatter, chatter, chatter; but when you bid them talk, they are dumb as fish. But there are ways and ways, Señor Judge, and by the cross of St. Lo! she'll talk before I've done with her. There is still, of course, no word of the lady's husband?"

Juan de la Vega shook his head gloomily. There was an acid behind the Churchman's smooth softness that he did not like. Besides, the question was unnecessary. Valdivia knew well enough that De Castro had escaped arrest and was still at large.

"A pity," went on his Eminence, shaking his head in turn. "A pity, indeed. I fear His Majesty will be angry, and from Saragossa to Burgos is no far stretch of the arm for Ferdinand. As to the Countess, it is De Castro's absence that gives my scheme its chance. It was a proverb suggested it. Assume a virtue if you have it not! 'Ah, ha!' thought I, 'assume a husband if you have him not;' and I think the shadow will serve my purpose as well as the substance. In your prison of Los Perdidos," he went on thoughtfully, "you have, of course, cells of observation?"

"No doubt; but Pedro Martoval, the head gaoler, can inform you better. My acquaintance with Los Perdidos is official."

"Long may it be nothing more! This is the place, is it not? Now, Señor Judge, one last word. As His Majesty's Commissioner, I act on his authority; but if I seem to trample a little on the forms of law, the responsibility is mine. The King knows how to pardon an excess of zeal that works to his advantage. Your part is to lend a lie the colour of truth, and for your own sake I beg you play the part well. Faugh! what a vile smell! Are His Majesty's guests in Los Perdidos long-lived?"

"Not commonly," answered De la Vega,

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drily, descending in turn from the coach. "Perhaps because the fevers are anticipated by the blood-letting."

The suggestion was too significant to be misunderstood, and even Valdivia's warm blood chilled under it as he stood with his upraised hand on the ponderous knocker. Then he shrugged his shoulders, turning again to the door with a little careless gesture of the unoccupied hand that set his rings flashing.

"Bah!" said he, "our play is a comedy; grin if you like, but no more than a comedy. I leave tragedies to the law! In the King's name!" and the knocker fell with a crash.

The Prison of the Lost! Never did name and place better agree. It was the prison of lost lives. Few who crossed its threshold tasted pure air again, except once, and that was the day which the wise man of Israel found to be better than the day of his birth. It was the prison of lost hopes. Let the King's doubtful clemency spare the life, the grip of Los Perdidos was second only to that of the grave, and within its walls a man might rot for forty years—forgotten! Nay! Even the grave was kindlier, larger-hearted, its oblivion less complete. Let it take a man to itself, and his name lives upon the headstone; but in Los Perdidos the creaking door shut out all identity, even all sex, and thenceforward nothing lived but a number.

It was the high priest to this temple of the ruined, Pedro Martoval himself, who opened the door. Behind him stood a deputy Cerberus, a long-handled pike in one hand, a smoky lantern in the other, and at sight of this last his Eminence marvelled, for daylight was broad in the streets—marvelled until the door was shut! Then he understood.

With nothing more than a passing glance at the Cardinal, Pedro Martoval bowed clumsily to De la Vega.

"You are in the nick of time, Excellency. Number Nine has been transferred to 000, and the vacancy will just fit——"

It was well for Pedro Martoval that Valdivia was not only in high good humour, but also that for the success of his scheme the gaoler's co-operation was necessary, else that significant stretching-out of a grimy hand towards his Eminence's sleeve might have been dearly paid for. As it was, swallowing his repugnance, Valdivia broke in with a laugh—

"Not yet, my friend, not yet. When my day comes for burial, please God, I shall be dead. Señor Judge, explain to him what is required, and bid him take us to a private room."

"You hear his Eminence?" said De la Vega curtly. "It is for an interrogation in secret, and—listen now—for your own sake, be more courteous."

But Pedro Martoval was unabashed.

"Give me the lantern, and do thou bolt the door, Juancito, my son. This way, Señors. Number Nine still suits; and as to the courtesy, how was I to tell? We have all sorts here, and the courtesy of the devil himself wouldn't please them, old friend as he is to most. Beware of that hole in the floor, Monseigneur; one long stride, and you're over it. So; that is right. Courtesy! Courtesy! You'll be telling me next, Excellency, that the windows want raking out."

"Windows?" said Valdivia gravely; "are there windows? I see none. I suppose it is the smell that chokes them?"

Under cover of the darkness, Pedro Martoval grinned appreciation, but made no reply. None knew better than he that the one small grating, three feet above the door, was so shuttered with the filth of generations that light could only come in as if by stealth. If dainty stomachs rebelled against Los Perdidos, so much the worse for them. He, Pedro Martoval, was paid to keep his prisoners safe, and not to clean windows.

Number Nine, being vacant, stood already open, and at its door Pedro Martoval paused, the lantern raised above his head.

"If ghosts could speak, Excellency," said he, "what tales they would tell! Three hundred years, and perhaps six to the year; call it two thousand who have come and gone since these walls were built."

Valdivia sucked in his breath between his closed teeth as he looked round the gloomy cell, three yards this way, three yards that, and a little more in height. Two narrow windows, a foot-and-a-half long by a palm wide, were thrown up against the roof, a little heap of rubbish robbing them of one-third their length. A stone block the height of a table filled one corner, beside it a smaller block, fixed in the floor, served as a seat: these were the sole furnishings. To the height of a man's shoulder the dusky walls shone like polished marble under the flicker of the lamp, and a foot from their base the flags were visibly worn. For three hundred years a long procession of unhappy wretches had wandered like beasts round the cramped space, hugging the widest range of march possible to the vital energy of their despair.

"Two thousand?" said Valdivia, drawing

"'If ghosts could speak, Excellency.'"

his open hand across his eyes as if to wipe out the dismal vision, "surely not, surely not."

"For thirty years I have been gaoler in Los Perdidos, and I should know," answered Pedro Martoval sourly. Los Perdidos was to him as good as wife or child, and to doubt its grim statistics was to doubt its honour. "For one who stays two years, there are fifty see a week out and no more. Will the room suit your Excellencies?"

"For to-day, yes," answered Valdivia; "but not for to-morrow—or, rather, I suppose, next day. For it I must have a room that overlooks the courtyard; have you such?"

"The courtyard," repeated Pedro Martoval, looking apologetically at La Vega, "perhaps your Excellency does not know that in Los Perdidos the courtyard is given over to—that is to say, is used for—in a word, is where the prisoners, the fifty who stay a week, take the air for—for—the last time?"

"My Excellency understands very well," answered Valdivia drily. "Is there such a room?"

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"Yes, but because of—of—the uses of the courtyard, the window is boarded up. When a man may, any day, make one of a little procession, with a priest at his elbow, it is not an agreeable sight——"

"The window can be unboarded. Take your instructions from me. How long does it require to erect the—um—platform on which your guests take the air for the last time?"

"You will understand, Excellency, that the—um—platform being wanted at short intervals—five or six times a year for this cell alone—it is convenient to keep it in sections."

"I see. An hour, then?"

"Say two, that it may be firm."

"Quite so; if it fell, the prisoner might get hurt, might even break a limb! Well, that time is too short. You must spend a night over it—to-morrow night, let us say, and do not be ashamed of your honest labour. Rasp the saws well, bang the hammers, laugh over it, sing over it, and set a lantern or two so that progress may be seen from the window."

"But the criminal, Excellency; I have no orders?"

"Leave the criminal to me, or, rather, to my Lord Judge; your part is to prepare for him. Do you catch my meaning? Plenty of noise, plenty of bustle, and the shape made clear through the darkness. At this time of year morning is grey at five; at five, then, the procession starts; but though it must pass the window you know of, it must pass on the other side of the courtyard. Señor de la Vega and I will both be there—I by the window, and he on the scaffold. What happens there is his affair. Your business is to keep silent, and do as you're bid. My friend," and Valdivia's smooth face roughened and reddened into a fury of passion, "that thou art a drunkard I see. Let not the bibber turn babbler, or, by the Lord whose poor servant I am, that scaffold shall not have been set up for naught! I suppose it will be high enough from the ground to hang a man? You understand? What? What? Well, then, fetch here the Countess de Castro."

For once, Pedro Martoval's truculent self-sufficiency failed him. Before Valdivia's sudden outburst of rage he winced and quailed, as he had seen a hundred better men than himself wince and quail unpitied. The ruddiness faded from his coarse face, his plump cheeks fell flabby, and so dry was his throat that he could but whinge and gasp, striving to find words.

"Yes, Excellency, yes. His Nobility, there, knows that I am willing and humble. The Countess de Castro? Number Four, that is. She who came five days ago? Yes, Excellency, yes; at once, at once."

"At once," repeated Valdivia harshly. "But no roughness, none of your gaoler's ways: the Countess is an honourable lady." Then, as Pedro Martoval hurried on his errand, he turned to La Vega, laughing pleasantly. "The rascal knows his master. I can shape him as I will; and now for the woman."

"She is different clay, Lord Cardinal; or, rather, not clay at all—marble."

"What we cannot shape we can chip, or, at the worst, break," answered Valdivia. Along the corridor came the sound of returning feet. "Clay we mould, iron we melt, stone we crush; and if Inez de Castro elects to be the last, so much the worse for Inez de Castro!"

If the unhappy woman who was ushered into the cell by Pedro Martoval with unwonted servility overheard Valdivia's last word, as it was probably intended that she should, she gave no sign. Drawing back until he leaned against the stone seat, the Cardinal motioned her to move on to the corner diagonally opposite, then curtly bade Martoval leave the cell, closing the door behind him.

"But do not lock it," he added. "God forbid that I should have the key turned on me in such a hopeless hole as this!" With the shutting of the door he turned to the woman: "You are Inez de Castro, wife to Juan de Castro?"

"By God's grace, yes."

"You do well to give God thanks," said Valdivia with gentle gravity. "The Count de Castro is a gallant gentleman; the pity of it is—he is a traitor."

The light which had leaped to her eyes faded as he ended, and her face froze again to its rigid stoniness. The duel must go on. What, for a moment, she had taken for an overture of peace, was but the doffing of a hat before a sword's thrust. "A traitor," repeated Valdivia, as she made no reply; "and yet the King's clemency——"

With a little gesture that embraced the sordid misery of their surroundings, the gloom, the filth, the desolation, she interrupted him.

"For five days I have known the King's clemency—I, who am innocent. Yes, Monseigneur?"

"Innocent of act, but not of knowledge,"

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"'Not such a choice as that!'"

said the Cardinal. The phrase he had coined in the coach stuck in his memory. It was apt, sententious, and had a judicial flavour that he relished. "Amongst your husband's papers you accidentally—you see, I am frank, and strain no point against you, but admit your knowledge was accidental—you found a list of the Count de Castro's fellow-conspirators?"

"Yes, Monseigneur, and destroyed it, as he would have done."

"Was that your duty to your King?"

"It was my duty to my husband."

"But the King comes first?"

"Oh, sir," she retorted contemptuously, "it is plain you have no wife!"

"I have the Church," replied Valdivia, moved by resentment to an unwise reply.

"Then which comes first, Church or King?"

"'Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.'"

"And so I do. My husband's honour is God's gift to me, and, by His grace, I shall keep it."

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"You destroyed the list?"

"Yes, Monseigneur, I have already said so."

"But you remember the names upon it?"

For a moment she paused, then, looking him full in the face, she lied flatly.

"I remember nothing."

"What a misfortune for De Castro!" said Valdivia, turning to La Vega, who, all the while, had stood by in silence. "But he will not be the first man to die through a bad memory."

"My husband? Juan? But he—he escaped?"

"For a time, yes."

"And now? Oh, Monseigneur, Monseigneur! for God's sake——"

Her voice broke as Valdivia turned to her, a benevolent pity in his eyes. So moved was he that De la Vega, standing at his elbow, almost looked to see him weep for tender sympathy.

"Ah! Señora, Señora, did I not say there was need for the King's clemency? And, indeed, he is mercy itself. 'Go, Cardinal,' said he; 'go to this most unhappy lady, and tell her my heart bleeds for her distress. It is the mystery of life that the innocent suffer for the guilty. Go! Assure her of my sympathy in her anxieties, and say I—the King—give her her husband's life.'"

"My husband's life! Juan's life! Ah! dear God! I thank Thee! I thank Thee!"

"And are there no thanks due to the King?"

"Oh, yes! Yes, yes; my husband's life! My husband's life!"

"Aye," said Valdivia; and his tone, though firmer, was still benevolently tender. "On one condition"; and having said so much, he paused, that she might feel the pinch of the cleft stick which held her.

"A condition?" she said dully, her exuberance of gladness banished on the instant. "Oh! there is a condition?"

"Conditions are the prerogatives of kings. And yet the King makes you as God!" went on Valdivia, driving his words home with a hard emphasis. "He gives you power to prolong life or to cause death. Do you understand? *To cause death!* He is merciful, but justice cries against mercy and must be heard. Grope your memory again, Countess, for upon that list of names depends—ah! you understand? You understand? 'For that list,' said Ferdinand, 'I give her her husband's life; and, since I have no quarrel with her, I give her his property whether he lives or dies.' Now, do you taste the full flavour of the King's mercy? How magnanimous it is! How generous! How splendid! Are you in love with your husband, and desire to remain a wife? Speak, and all is well! Are you weary of him? Would you see your bonds broken? Him dead, and yourself free to put another in his place? Then forget,

"'God be merciful!' she whispered."

forget, forget; and though the world will say hard things of you, what matter? Juan de Castro will be dead, and you free to take a new man to your arms! The dead man's lands will be yours, and every day you can say: 'It was my own doing, my own doing—mine, only mine! The King would have spared him, but I said "No!" and he died!' Now, Inez de Castro, do you understand the King's mercy and do you still forget?"

Men said that of all preachers who filled the pulpit from time to time in the great Cathedral of Saragossa, none could move the multitude like Cardinal Valdivia. Success in oratory comes as much from manner as from matter, and many times the melody of the voice counts for more than the sound sense of the words. Never had Valdivia, swaying an Easter crowd to penitence in the church

of Our Lady of the Pillar, put forth his powers as he now did to move his audience of one unhappy woman. The result justified the effort. She gloomed, she brightened, she trembled, she wept, and at the last fell upon her knees, as much from emotion as in an agony of reproachful supplication.

"Not such a choice as that—my husband's dishonour or his life! Not that—ah, God! not that! Oh! you are cruel, cruel, you priest of love and mercy—cruel, cruel!"

"She was not sure; no, she was not sure."

"I do not press you for an answer now," said Valdivia, deep pity eloquent through his words. He heard De la Vega gasping at his elbow, and judged it time to put an end to the scene when even that hardened justiciary was in danger of losing his self-control. "Not to have put the truth plainly before you would truly be cruel. I am but the King's *comisionado*. That list His Majesty must have. The State demands it; the husband refuses it. Let the wife amend the refusal; for if she does not——" Valdivia paused and glanced aside at La Vega. Would it be safe to leave him the passing of the pretended sentence? But the risk was too great, and in a harder voice he went on: "If she does not, the husband dies, dies at dawn; not to-morrow, but the day following, dies in the courtyard of Los Perdidos. Señora de Castro, have you an answer for the King?"

"Let me think, let me think! It is his honour! They trusted him, these others, and—oh! let me think! I cannot answer now, I cannot, I cannot."

"May night bring counsel!" said Valdivia solemnly, flinging open the door as he spoke. A few yards down the passage stood Martoval, a shadowy figure in the perpetual twilight. "See that this lady has a more airy cell and all honourable treatment. In two days, or earlier, she will be free. If she desires to see me, send for me at any hour, whether by night or by day; it is on the King's service. You have your orders," he added significantly; "see that they are obeyed to the letter." And Pedro Martoval, still shaking from his fright, bowed obsequiously.

Inez de Castro had risen from her knees, and, her face buried in her hands, stood leaning against the wall.

"Come, Excellency," said Pedro Martoval, touching her humbly. But for Valdivia's warning, he would have wrenched her round and sent her staggering on her way.

"I must think," answered she, following him mechanically, "but my brain is a-fire and I cannot think; I cannot—oh! I cannot." Once in the passage she turned, a new thought rousing her. "You said he was in Los Perdidos! I shall see him?"

"Not to-day, nor to-morrow," answered Valdivia coldly, "but the next day, at dawn, in the courtyard: yes."

"God be merciful!" she whispered, and,

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led by Martoval, was swallowed up in the grey of the corridor.

"I told you," said La Vega, "that she was of different clay."

"And I told you," retorted Valdivia, "that what we cannot mould, we break."

The cell to which Pedro Martoval led his prisoner was comfort itself compared with that she had lately occupied. Of the same height and breadth, it was almost thrice as long, and over the flagged floor a covering of rough matting, passably clean, was spread. The fixed stone furnishings gave place to a wooden table and a settle with a heavy, rounded back. But the chief gain lay in the fuller light. The narrow, half-choked slits had disappeared, and in their stead was a wide, embrasured window starting three feet from the floor, the ample splay of which brought almost the entire of the courtyard into view.

But to the advantages of the transfer Inez de Castro was numb. That she could not think was the literal truth, or, more accurately, she could not reason—could not grope or break a way through the net that Valdivia had woven round her. The list? Yes, she remembered that. Would to God she did not; then they might rack her, tear her, kill her, and she alone would suffer. But she remembered; not all the names, perhaps, but too many, remembered all the better because for the most part they were names of friends. If she spoke, what then? A red vision of Ferdinand's inexorable vengeance answered her, and, crouched on the settle, she rocked herself from side to side, moaning aloud. How could she speak? Juan would be dishonoured, dishonoured through her, and hate her for the dishonour.

But if she did not speak? Ah! dear God! if she did not speak, then—oh! she could not think of *then*, she could only lay her burning head upon her hands and pray that she might die. It was curious, but what stung her sharpest, goading her into the momentary oblivion of an impotent rage, was Valdivia's cynical suggestion that in silence lay wealth and freedom. Wealth and freedom! When to live in the rat-eaten cellars of Los Perdidos with Juan de Castro would be happiness!

Twice, under pinch of the goad, she rushed to a decision; but twice, even when her hand was raised to strike the door, she drew back. Was this what Juan de Castro would have her do? She was not sure; no, she was not sure; and so the circle of the struggle recommenced.

What would Juan de Castro have her do? So deep was her love, her will so wrapped in that of Juan de Castro, that the one question for her was: "What would he have me do?" In the conflict of her indecision, the day, the night, and the day following passed, and a second night fell with victory upon neither side.

In all that time she saw no one but Pedro Martoval, who never spoke. Valdivia held aloof; he might watch the struggle through his spy-hole, but he held aloof. Isolation was part of his plan. Thereby the tension was more steadily strained, and under that tension, said he, her obstinate will—he called it obstinacy, not knowing the power of love—her will must snap. So the second night gloomed and fell.

Then followed a horrible thing. Into the black vault of the darkened courtyard lights streamed—not many, but sufficient. Out of the dead silence of the courtyard sounds broke—the rasp of saws, the thud of axes, the ring of hammers, iron on iron as the nails went home, the nails that were making fast the beams of her husband's scaffold. Into the two-foot deep embrasure leant Inez de Castro, fascinated by the uprearing of this altar of sacrifice, her hands tight clasped upon the bars, her face fast pressed against the rigid metal.

There, to the right, she had to slant her head a little to see, a Thing rose amidst the shadows, a Thing about which shadows moved, shadows that built it higher and higher and higher. Built it? They? No, no, no; it was she who built it, she who stood there staring out into the night, her hands gripping hard the rusty iron. She! who else? Her hands might grow numb with the tenseness of their hold, yet, nevertheless, it was she who built, and through the slow hours of the night the Thing rose upon which Juan was to die. No matter whose hands did the work, Juan's wife knew in her breaking heart that it was she who built it. Valdivia had made that clear.

Some time after midnight—how many hours she could not tell, two or three—the noise ceased. Gathering their tools together, tools she had set a-working, the shadows disappeared, taking their coarse laughter and babble of talk with them. But the woman still clung to the bars. Two lanterns—one upon the ground, and one hung high upon the wall opposite—were light enough to set her imagination on fire. Half fainting, half dazed, she pressed her cheek as far to the left as the splay of the embrasure allowed, and waited.

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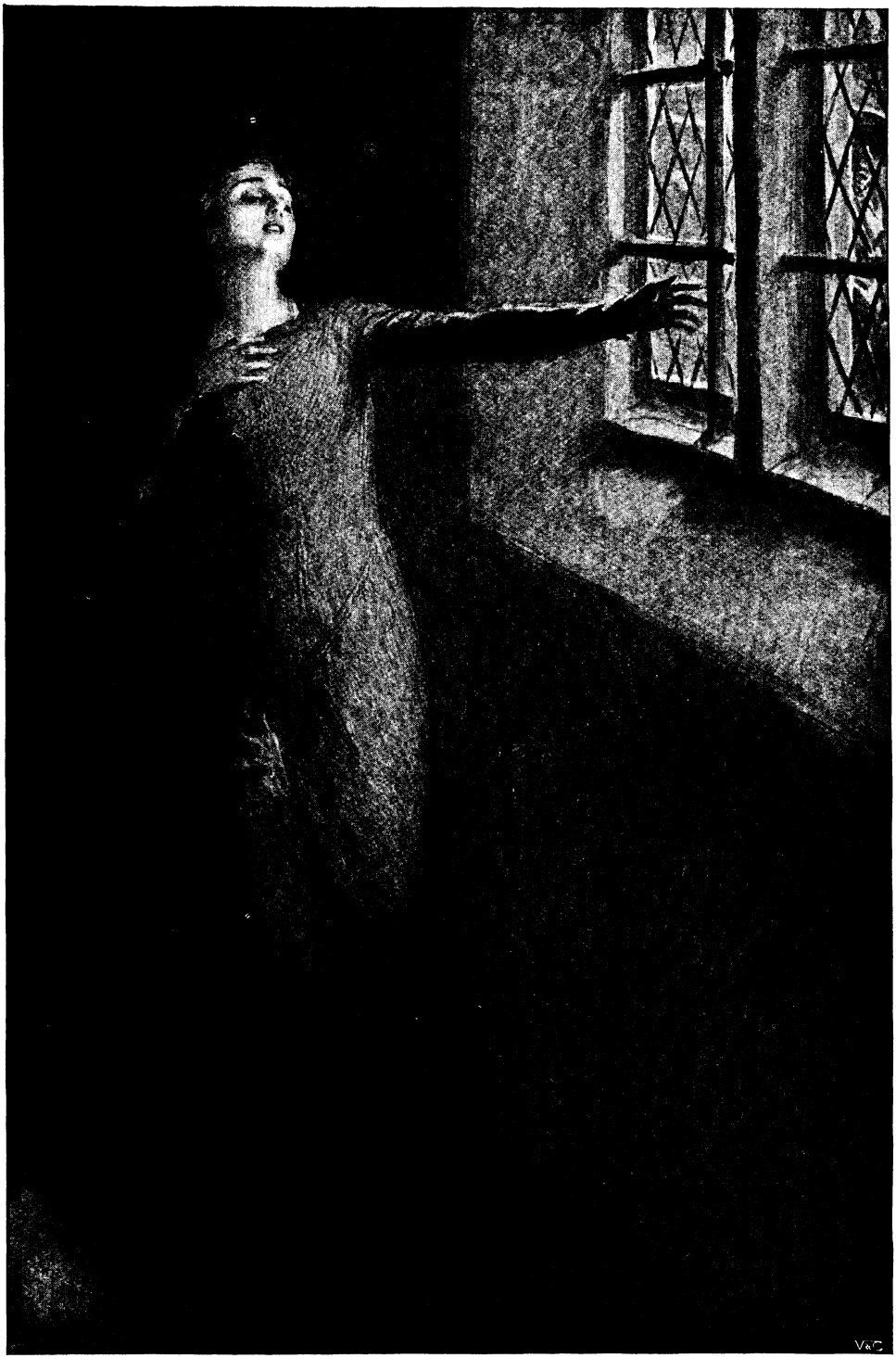

"For not all the bolts and bars in Los Perdidos could hold Inez de Castro prisoner."

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Up above, the stars paled, a faint olive filtered through the purple of the night, spreading out in quivering lines like the sticks of a shaken fan; grey patches of fleece—to become crimson presently—broke the curve of the arch, and away to the left in the courtyard a door opened. Without slackening her grasp of the bars, Inez, drawing in her breath with a groan, shifted her position to the further side. But it was all a blank, a grey murk solid against the fading purple above the line of the roof.

"Not yet," she whispered, "not yet!" and the voice of Valdivia, soft as her own, answered from beyond the edge of the window—

"Because it is not yet dawn."

He had not needed the spy-hole above the cell door to tell him where he would find Juan de Castro's wife. It was, as he said, his trade to know women, and up to a certain point he was a master craftsman.

So, for a time, the two waited, each acutely strained, while overhead the star-points faded, and almost in a breath the fleeces broadened into splendour. Then, for the second time, the door opened, and across the field of vision a figure shambled. It was that of a man clad all in black, and with a great sword slung across his shoulder. Leaning nearer the bars, Valdivia held his breath to listen, for Inez de Castro was again speaking, but not to him.

"Show me the right, O God! show me the right, and give me strength to do it!"

Out into the dusk of the morning trailed a slow procession, but of all within it Inez de Castro saw but one. Him she knew well, though she saw no face, for his head was bowed as a man bows before the Eternal; but his height, his carriage, his very clothing, to the knot of ribbons on the shoulder, were all familiar. On they crept, the low sob of a dirge upon the air, priests and prison warders, pace by pace, the funeral march of a man yet living, until they were abreast of the window. Then there was a pause, and the dirge deepened.

"Juan! my Juan!" she cried; "I cannot, I dare not! Thy mercy, O Lord! and not the King's! Into Thy hands, for Thou art our Father—loving, pitiful, compassionate! Take my Juan! Father! take him and keep him for me! keep—him—for—me—for—me——"

The numb fingers, grown yet more numb, loosed their grip. As the procession halted at the ladder's foot, she staggered and fell back, for not all the bolts and bars in Los Perdidos could hold Inez de Castro prisoner. Had not Valdivia promised that in two days she would be free?

The sound of her fall alarmed the listener, and he peered into the cell. Then he cried across to De la Vega—

"The play's played out. To understand a woman is hard, but who can understand a fool?"

A GOOD TURN.

A SOUL stood at the Judgment Seat
Where nothing may be hid.
The charge was read, with drooping head
He said: "All this I did."
Too late to argue or entreat,
The prosecution was complete.

There rose a clamour at the door
Of one who strove outside.
"He sheltered me when I was poor!"
The breathless witness cried.
The court was mute with one accord,
"Friend, go up higher," said the Lord.

JESSIE POPE.

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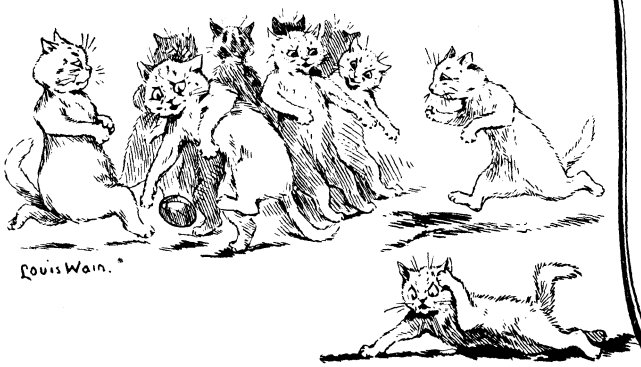

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

THE FASCINATION OF THE FREE PASS.

By B. A. Clarke.

"Look at this." Oakshott displayed a leather badge. "It is a pass for the editor of the *Grocers' Chronicle* to the Brewers' Exhibition at the Agricultural Hall. Do you think I had any wish to see the Brewers' Exhibition? And yet I moved Fleet Street to obtain this ticket."

"Why?"

"Heredity. It is a taint in our blood. The Oakshotts must use Press tickets. None of the family, by the way, has ever been connected with the Press. I fight against the craving—no one suspects how fiercely—but it cannot be slain. At times it seizes me, and I have to rush away and attend an entertainment free—what, scarcely matters. At such times the offices of the smaller newspapers in Fleet Street draw me like a magnet; and not only have I, in common with all my family, the power of extracting passes from perfect strangers, but (and this also is a family characteristic) with the passes I can obtain privileges they are not supposed to carry. For example, at the Brewers' Exhibition I occupied the royal box. Tools for those that can use them; and none can use passes like we Oakshotts. I will give you one instance which occurred when I was a boy. My grandfather was up from the country, and my father had obtained a pass admitting the editor of the *Gardeners' Chronicle* to a dachshund show at the Crystal Palace. We all went. My father was the editor, and my grandfather, my mother, and all of us boys and girls were the friend. Even the baby in arms went. Someone incautiously showed her the pass, and then nothing could keep her at home. At London Bridge we met all my uncles, with unbroken families, and my great-uncle Ephraim. Passes, every man jack of them! When we reached the Palace, the show had not been thrown open to the public; but an exception was being made for exhibitors. My father was so clear about our right to this privilege that the doorkeeper (a most surly brute) gave way.

"'What? Eight of you on to one poor dog! It don't give 'im a chawnce.'

"We entered the ring. My father detested all dogs and was afraid of them. Consequently every dachshund, without exception, tried to bite him.

"'Here comes your brother George,' said my mother. 'I am sure that he isn't an exhibitor.'

"One by one my uncles arrived. Each was a little bit annoyed that the others had done as well as himself; but all rejoiced in the failure of Uncle Ephraim, who had a way of scoring off them and was not modest about his triumphs. But when the judges entered, Great-uncle Ephraim was amongst them, poking dachshunds critically and making notes in an

MERELY FOR INFORMATION.

THE BORE: Just then a frightful wave struck the yacht! Down came the mast with an awful cr-r-r-ash! I thought all was lost and I should go to the bottom.

THE BORED: And why didn't you?

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enormous pocket-book. We were a silent party going home. It is not very often that the Oakshotts miss a possible trick.

"It was this Uncle Ephraim who saw Queen Victoria's Coronation. He had no ticket, but he wore a new silk hat, a frock coat, and carried a silver truncheon terminating in a gold crown. The gold and silver were paper, the truncheon was a piece of broomstick, and the crown was the work of a local carpenter. With this insignia held out before him, he went where he willed; and when the cavalcade arrived at Westminster, Uncle Ephraim was standing in a cleared space waving the military back. I am sufficiently an Oakshott to thrill at this achievement.

"The old man died some ten years back. He became very infirm, and it was certain he would never leave his bed; but to the very last he was applying for newspaper passes. The end came in a second, as he was opening his letters. He held 'Admit the Editor of the *Volunteer Record*' in his hand when he entered the other world."

IN A GOOD CAUSE.

MOTHER OF SIX GIRLS (to butler, who is moving the piano himself in readiness for a dance): Do take care, Smithers—you'll strain yourself.

BUTLER: Don't mind me, mum. Anything to make a show and get one of the young ladies off our hands. It's thrown in my face every time I go into the village.

IN PRAISE OF CLEANLINESS.

LITTLE GIRL (as caller arrives): Look, mother! Mr. Smith has washed off his beard.

Oakshott spoke gloomily about this family trait, but I am disposed to envy it. The only place of entertainment that ever admitted me free was the old Cormorant Theatre in Southwark. I use the prefix because it has such a delightful man-about-town touch, suggesting that London theatres are all familiar to me, and that connected even with this humble home of the drama I have a score of happy memories. Actually I never heard of the Cormorant until a book-canvasser gave me a pass to its pit. Still, there is no injustice in referring to it as "the old" Cormorant. It was old, or it had lived very hard. Arriving at the Cormorant in good time, I found that there was an early door (sixpence extra), the other door opening only on Sundays. I paid the sixpence. When I got inside, I discovered that it was compulsory to leave hats and umbrellas in the cloak-room (another sixpence), and an attendant forced a programme upon me, bringing my contributions up to eighteenpence. I obtained a front seat, but this in the old Cormorant was hardly an advantage. The slope of the floor is very steep. My fellow-pittites sustained themselves during the play by drinking bottled stout, and when a bottle

was empty, it was placed on the floor and allowed to roll, we in the front row getting the benefit. I saw the last act of "Ruffian Justice" buried up to my knees in empty bottles.

The management must have found the granting of free passes pretty profitable, because they extended the system. London was flooded with Cormorant passes. Men would march into City offices, fling down a handful of orders, and out without speaking a word. All the men at my office went at one time or other, and all were badly victimised. To be revenged, we collected "Ruffian Justice" passes until we could send one of our number to the theatre with a full hand. It needed a man with nerve, so we sent the shipping clerk. We went with him. He took his stand in the *foyer*, with a score of others waiting to have their passes dated and numbered. At the ticket window was the manager himself. The shipping clerk led off with a pass to the family circle.

"Family circle all taken. Can do you a front row at a shilling extra."

"How careless of me! It was a family circle front row pass I should have given up."

The manager looked at the second ticket and then again at his plan.

"I am sorry, sir. I can't think how I came to make such a mistake; but the last seat in the front row was allotted just before you arrived. As a favour, I will do you a good seat in the dress circle. Yes, I can give you one next to the gangway at one and sixpence on your front row family circle ticket. You can't kick at that."

"No," said the shipping clerk, "it would be impossible to grumble at that; but I happen to have a dress circle ticket."

He produced a pass for the dress circle.

"My mind must be going," said the manager; "the whole dress circle is taken to-night by a young ladies' school. But, as I have caused you so much inconvenience, I will pass you into the orchestra stalls for another shilling. That's reasonable enough."

"They ought not to let me go about," said the shipping clerk. "I have a ticket to the orchestra stalls. It was orchestra stalls I was trying to say."

"This beats everything," said the manager. "People have been put into strait-waistcoats for doing things less silly. What do you think of my having picked up to-morrow's plan instead of to-day's? Yes, sir; and every blessed seat taken for to-night except one

AWKWARDLY PUT.

THE LADY: I must tell you that my husband is most particular—exacting, indeed.

THE COOK (just engaged): Lor, mum, I won't mind that; I've buried *two bad-tempered husbands* myself.

PROOF POSITIVE.

SHE: I don't believe your love for me amounts to much.

HE: Well, it has overdrawn my bank account.

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